



# CHURCHILL

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A Leader for All Ages

**Childhood  
and family life**

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**Early adventures**

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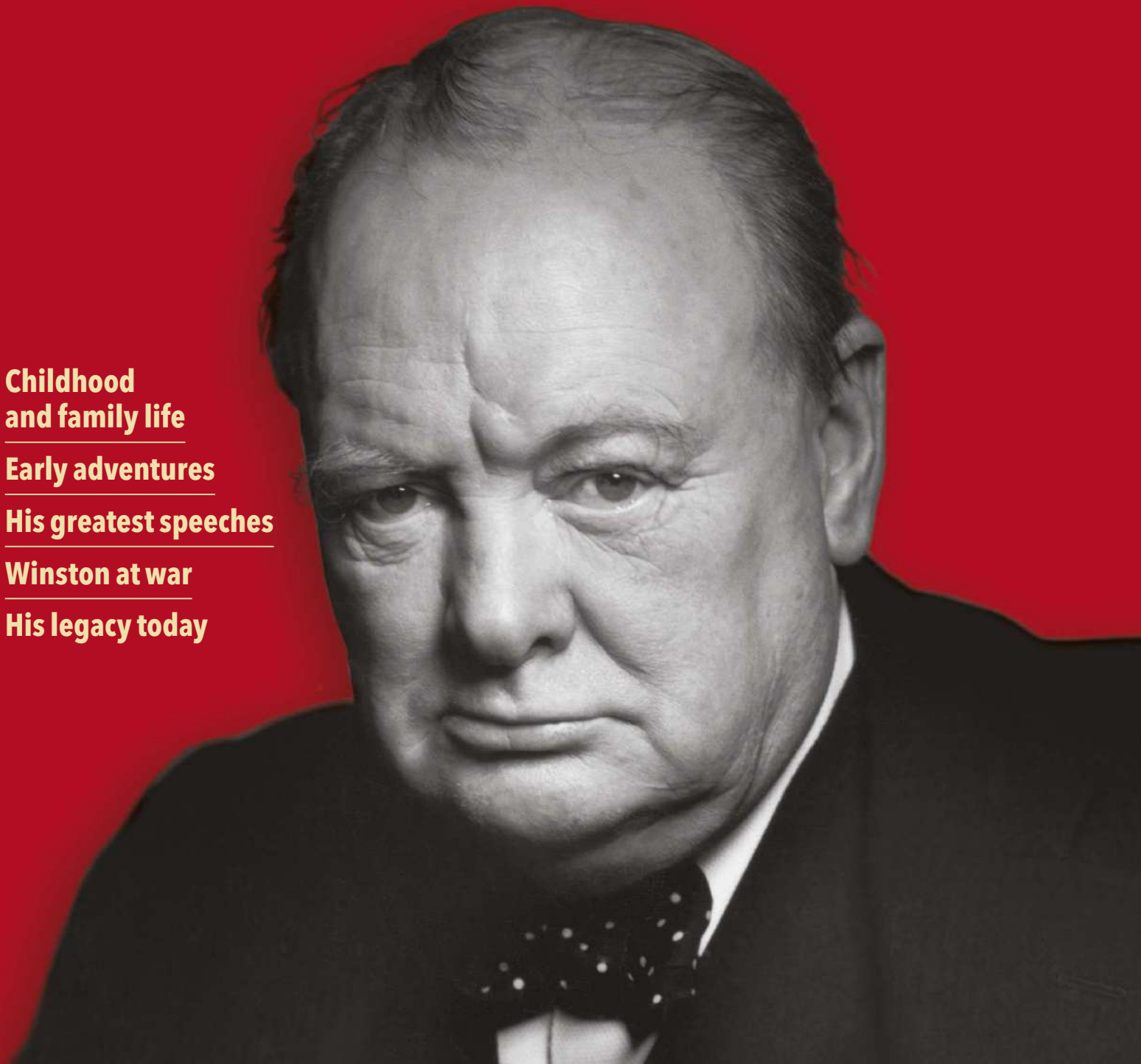
**His greatest speeches**

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**Winston at war**

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**His legacy today**



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# CHURCHILL

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A Leader for All Ages

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# A COMPLEX HERO

Churchill was far from perfect as a man and enjoyed limited success as a politician. But, as the leader who saved Britain from disaster in its hour of need, he remains a figure to revere and inspire

BY GAVIN MORTIMER

**L**ate on the evening of 11 September 2001, Rudy Giuliani climbed into bed at the end of the most traumatic day of his life. The New York mayor had witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers and the deaths of thousands of his people, and was still overwhelmed by the enormity of it all. On his bedside table lay a recently published biography of Winston Churchill, a book he had started reading the previous week. Mayor Giuliani opened the book and turned to the chapter about the bombing of London in 1940.

"I thought by reading that, I could learn some lessons from how Churchill got the people of England through something, which over the length of time, was worse than September 11th," he recalled.

Giuliani was not the first politician to seek inspiration from Britain's wartime prime minister and nor will he be the last. Indeed, a bust of Churchill has been in the

oval office of the White House since 1965, when it was presented to President Lyndon B Johnson following the death of Britain's most famous statesman.

But why does the veneration of Churchill endure? After all, this was a man whose political career was largely a failure for all but five years of the Second World War. He was actually voted out of office in

**"Churchill was  
a man for a  
crisis, and that  
is what Britain  
was facing when  
he became prime  
minister"**

---

July 1945, rejected by the very people he had led to victory against the twin evils of Nazi Germany and imperialistic Japan. Yet in that decision of the British people to elect another leader, we can find the reason why he continues to be revered around the world three-quarters of a century later, and why Rudy Giuliani turned to Churchill in his time of need, rather than presidents Roosevelt, Wilson or Truman.

## **RIGHT MAN, RIGHT TIME**

Churchill was a man for a crisis, and that is what Britain was facing when he became prime minister on 10 May 1940. On that very same day, the Nazis invaded the Low Countries, looking to add Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium and France to their recent conquests of Norway and Denmark. Churchill inherited a divided government in which appeasers and defeatists proliferated. Several wanted Britain to sue for peace with Hitler, but Churchill blew away the noxious cloud of negativity that hung over the war cabinet.



#### FLAWED ICON

"Self-absorbed, pig-headed, petulant, self-indulgent and dogmatic... these weaknesses became strengths in the war"

It was no surprise that he did so. For a decade he had been practically the lone voice in British politics warning against the policy of appeasement. From the start, Churchill had seen Hitler for the despot he was: a thug, a fascist and a man bent on war.

This was one of the rare times Churchill proved to be an astute judge of character. Sizing up people wasn't one of his strong points, for the simple reason that he had little interest in the human race. It was one of his many weaknesses. He was also self-absorbed, pig-headed, petulant, self-indulgent and dogmatic. He was prone to periods of depression, which he labelled the 'black dog', and his health suffered from his excessive smoking and drinking.

Yet these failings became strengths in the war, particularly during the terrible days and months of 1940 and 1941 when Britain stood alone. The country needed bloody-minded defiance, and in Churchill they found its embodiment. He looked the part for a start, this bulldog of a man with

an expressive face and a genius for striking just the right note when he spoke to the nation. Neither sentimental nor melodramatic, Churchill's oratory stirred the soul of every Briton by his portrayal of the conflict pitting good against evil – what he called the "monstrous tyranny of that wicked man". Gone was any thought of suing for peace and instead the British people began to relish the fight, especially as they were the underdog (and there are few things that a Brit enjoys more than a David versus Goliath struggle).

#### HOPE IN THE DARKNESS

But to triumph in the struggle over fascism, Churchill had to make tough decisions that cost many lives. He never faltered, nor took the easier path. He stuck to the course he had set Britain on, resolute and unyielding. At such moments, alone and outnumbered, Churchill was in his element. As the war progressed, and the entry of America and the Soviets turned the tide in the Allies' favour, he became less

effective. By the end of the war he was unwanted. Britain was emerging into a new world and this relic from the Victorian era was not the man to lead them there.

The British people were right to vote Churchill from power. He was old, tired and sick, but more importantly, his work was done. He had not only saved Britain, but he had shown to the rest of the world a charismatic defiance that inspired, encouraged and, above all, instilled hope that one day the forces of fascism would be defeated.

"He was indeed made for the hour," wrote Lord Charles Moran, Churchill's physician throughout the war. "In the extraordinary circumstances of 1940... we needed a very unreasonable man at the top. If Winston had been a reasonable man he would not have taken the line he did; if he had been a man of sound judgement he might have considered it his duty to act differently. A sage would have been out of his element in 1940. We got instead another Joan of Arc." ●



# An Extraordinary Life

Over his 90 years, Churchill witnessed immense change and lived through some of history's most turbulent times



## 1874 Churchill is born

In a hurry from the start, Winston appears two months early on 30 November. A descendant of the dukes of Marlborough, he is born at Blenheim Palace.

## 1899-1902 Looking for adventure

Four years out of military school, and one failed election campaign down, Churchill travels to South Africa for the Boer War. He gains renown for his thrilling war reports and a daring escape from a Boer prison. On his return in 1900 he becomes MP for Oldham.

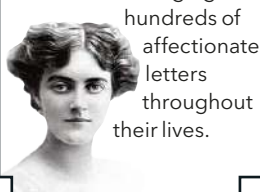


## 1904 Crossing the house

Increasingly belligerent towards his own Conservative Party, Churchill causes outrage by joining the Liberals. He is rewarded with a junior ministerial post in the Liberal government's Colonial Office in 1905.

## 1908 Marriage to Clementine

Aged 33, Winston marries the lively and intelligent Clementine Hozier. The couple will be together for 56 years and have five children, exchanging



hundreds of affectionate letters throughout their lives.

## 1914-18 Wartime failures

Churchill is energised as global conflict ignites. As first lord of the admiralty, he learns to fly and champions the development of aircraft and tanks. His initial fervour comes to an abrupt end. Convinced that an invasion through Turkey could cut the war short, he engineers the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915-16. The bloodbath will haunt him for the rest of his military career.



1874-1876

1899-1902

1901-1908

1914-1918

## 1876 Telephone invented

Scottish-born American scientist Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.



British soldiers cross a river during the Second Boer War

## 1899-1902 Boer War

In South Africa, Dutch settlers clash with British imperialists, triggering the Second Boer War. Almost 350,000 British soldiers are sent across the globe to fight. Years of gruelling sieges and bitter guerrilla warfare end in a British victory.

Troops at Gallipoli. Catastrophic events there tarred Churchill's military reputation



## 1901 Victoria dies

After 63 years and seven months on the British throne, Queen Victoria dies.



## 1914-18 First World War

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914 triggers a cascade of events bringing war across Europe and then the world. When Germany invades Belgium on 4 August 1914, Britain enters the war. Over 16 million people will die in the global conflict.



## 1920s

### Between the wars

Rejoining the Conservative Party in 1924, Churchill appears increasingly regressive, at odds with his colleagues and with the times. As chancellor, he disastrously returns Britain to the Gold Standard and backs the violent suppression of the 1926 General Strike. He fiercely opposes moves for Indian independence, yet later voices support for dictators Mussolini and Franco (below).



1920

1926-1933

## 1929-33

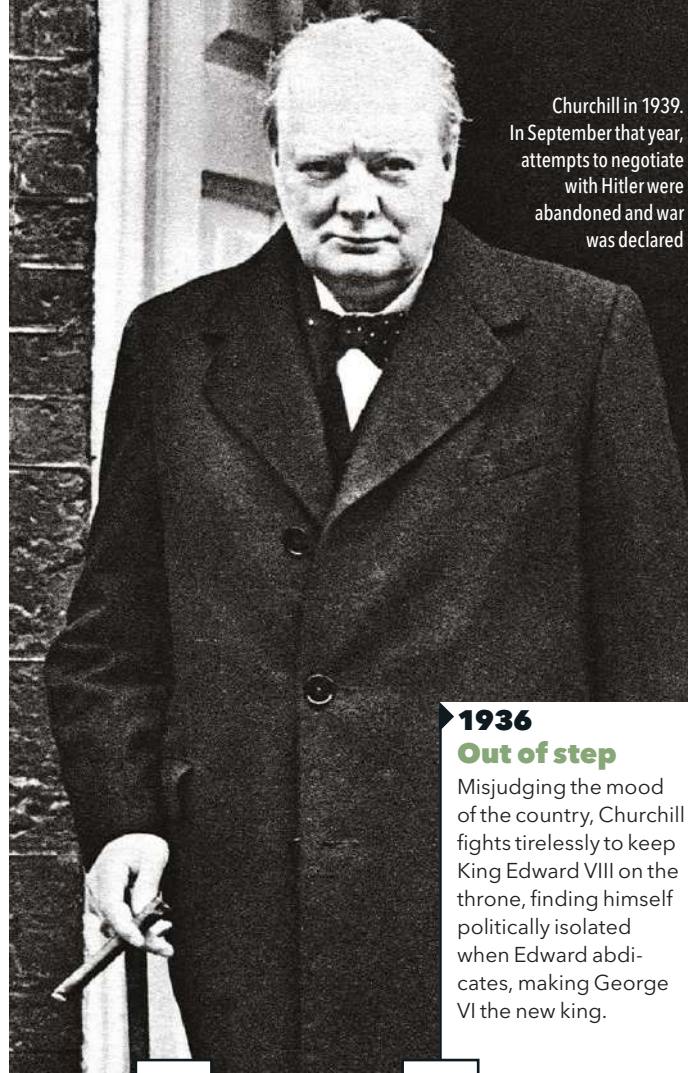
### Great Depression

The starting pistol on a decade of crippling economic decline is sounded when the American Stock Exchange collapses. By calling in its loans, the US spreads financial meltdown across the world. Already financially unstable, Germany is hit particularly hard.

## 1926

### Elizabeth born

Princess Elizabeth, Britain's future queen, is born on 21 April.



Churchill in 1939. In September that year, attempts to negotiate with Hitler were abandoned and war was declared

1933



## 1933

### Hitler rises as FDR becomes president

Desperate to recover from the war and economic woes, Germany makes Adolf Hitler chancellor. The same year, Franklin D Roosevelt enters the White House.

1936

## 1936

### Out of step

Misjudging the mood of the country, Churchill fights tirelessly to keep King Edward VIII on the throne, finding himself politically isolated when Edward abdicates, making George VI the new king.

1939

## 1938

### Warnings about appeasement

As one of the few voices warning of Germany's growing might, Churchill repeatedly clashes with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (below) and vociferously opposes the policy of appeasement. Chamberlain's resignation on 10 May 1940 leaves the position vacant for a dynamic new leader: Churchill.



## 1936

### King Edward abdicates

By planning to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson, King Edward VIII creates a crisis for the British monarchy.

## 1939

### Outbreak of Second World War

Two days after Hitler invades Poland on 1 September, Britain and France declare war on Germany. PM Neville Chamberlain - undermined by his attempts to appease Hitler - loses his ministers' support within a year.



## 1940

### Darkest hour

Overwhelmed by Germany's superior firepower, Allied forces are pushed back to the French port of Dunkirk. A massive evacuation is launched, bringing 338,000 Allied troops back across the English Channel. Shortly after, France capitulates, and much of Europe is subjected to Nazi occupation for the next four years. With Britain in imminent peril of defeat, Churchill – prime minister for just a matter of days – delivers a defiant speech, declaring: "we shall fight on the beaches... we shall never surrender."



The PM visits Normandy in July 1944 to check on the progress of Operation Overlord

## 1941

### Keeping the US on board

Addressing the US congress, Churchill declares "The British and American peoples will... walk together in majesty, in justice and in peace," in a rousing speech that helps ensure America's focus on Germany after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

## 1944

### D-Day doubts

Haunted by the carnage of the First World War, Churchill is cautious about the timing of 'D-Day', but when the invasion begins has to be dissuaded by the king from accompanying the troops. Nonetheless, days later he boards a destroyer to witness Overlord for himself.

## 1945

### Fading star

With victory in sight, the 'Big Three' – Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin – meet to make plans for the postwar world. Churchill is forced to accept Soviet promises of democracy in eastern Europe – promises that will prove empty.

## 1945

### Victory – and defeat

On 8 May, Churchill joins in jubilant celebrations to celebrate victory in Europe. His own joy is short-lived – that July's election sees him ousted by the welfare-reforming Labour Party led by Clement Attlee.



1940

1941

1944

1945

## 1940

### Battle of Britain

Germany's Luftwaffe air force launches a large-scale attack over southern England, attempting to destroy Britain's air defences before a land invasion.



## 1941

### Pearl Harbor

There is outrage as Japan carries out an unprovoked attack on US naval forces at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, an action that immediately brings the US into the war.

## 1944

### Normandy invasion

Britain and the US launch an invasion of Nazi-occupied western Europe. The largest seaborne invasion in history, Operation Overlord sees around 156,000 Allied troops land in Normandy on the first day of the invasion, 6 June.

US troops land in Normandy in June 1944. The invasion would turn the tide against Hitler

## 1945

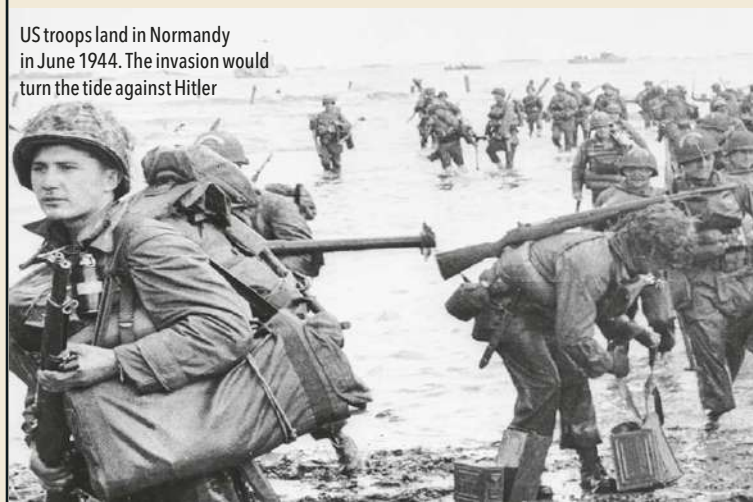
### Atom bomb

The world's first atomic bomb is dropped by an American B-29 bomber on Hiroshima at 8.15am on 6 August.

## 1945

### Victory in Europe

After 11 months of intense conflict, Germany unconditionally surrenders and Europe is finally liberated.







On the campaign trail in 1951 - his efforts saw him triumphantly returned to office



Mourners line the streets of London for Churchill's funeral

## 1946 Iron Curtain speech

Churchill delivers a landmark speech describing how "an iron curtain has descended across the continent", an ominous warning of communism's expanding influence across eastern Europe. Despite its hostile reception, the speech would prove prophetic.

## 1951 PM again

Churchill devotes himself to writing and public speaking until he is voted back into office. As prime minister once more, he deals aggressively with rebellions in Britain's disintegrating empire as the colonies of Kenya and Malaya agitate for independence. He also battles with illness and old age.

## 1955 Resignation and ill health

At the age of 80, Churchill steps down as prime minister. Increasingly deaf and suffering the effects of several strokes, he is nonetheless reluctant to give up the top job.

## 1965 Churchill dies

Having spent his remaining years enjoying the peace of his Chartwell home and painting in the Mediterranean, at 8am on 24 January 1965 Churchill dies of a final stroke at his London home, aged 90. ●

1946-1947

1951

1952

1953-1955

1960-1961

1965

## 1947 Partition of India

As it gains independence from the British empire, the country is split into two states - India and Pakistan - heralding mass migration, unrest and violence.

## 1950-53 Korean War

The growing rift between east and west is writ large as the Soviet-backed North Koreans invade South Korea.



## 1952 Elizabeth becomes queen

Aged 25, Elizabeth takes the throne on the death of her father. She is crowned the following year in a crowd-pleasing ceremony at Westminster Abbey, the first coronation to be televised, and knights Churchill the same year.

## 1961 New frontiers

Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human to journey into outer space when the Vostok spacecraft completes its orbit of the Earth on 12 April.

## 1960 JFK elected

John F. Kennedy defeats Richard Nixon to become, at 43, America's youngest elected president. He is later assassinated on 22 November 1963 in Dallas, Texas.



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# BECOMING CHURCHILL

Winston's childhood,  
early adventures and role  
in the First World War





Churchill as a young man of 25 in 1899. Desperate for accomplishment and adventure, he would be a war correspondent, soldier, celebrity and cabinet minister by the time he was 33

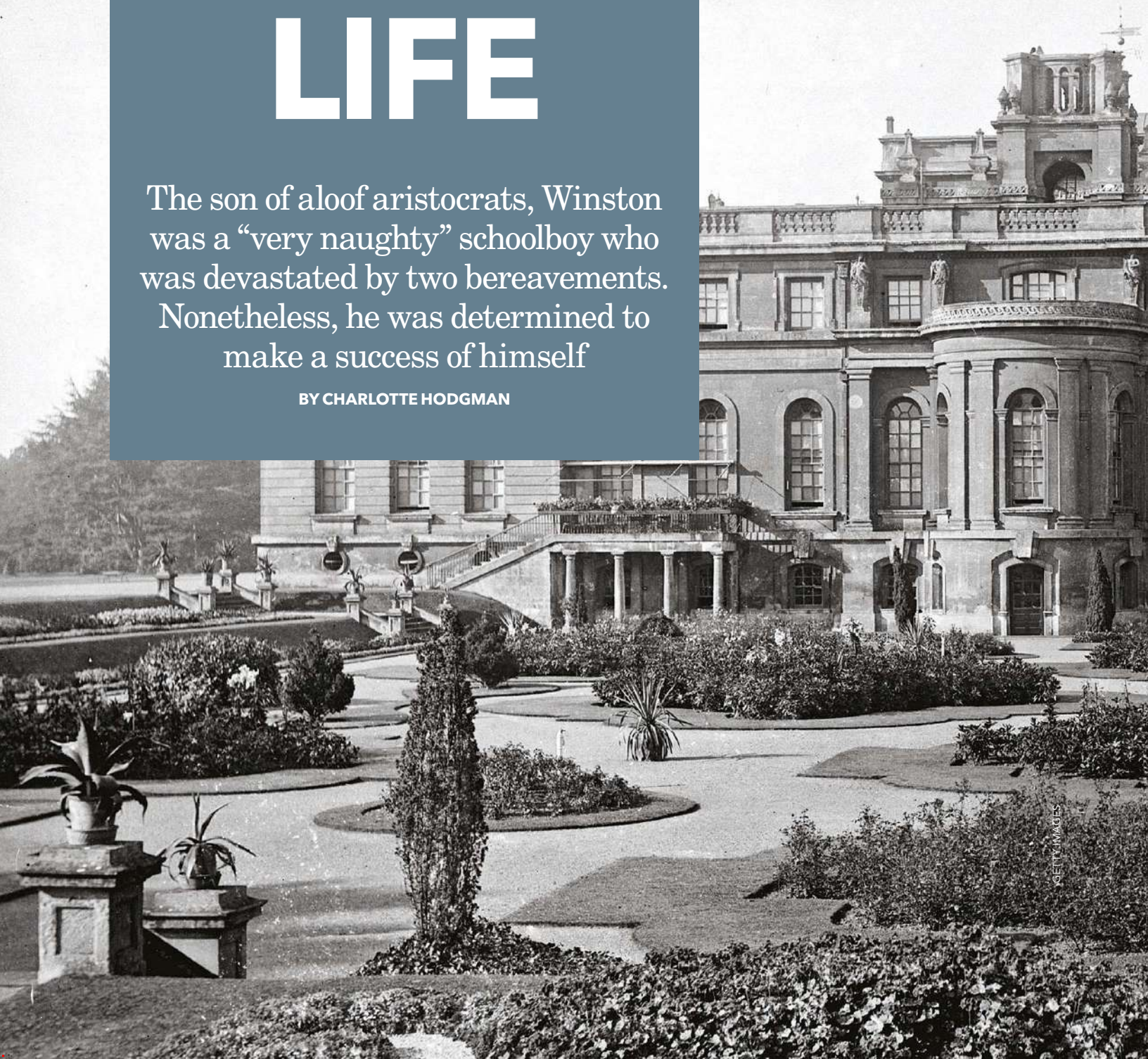


Becoming Churchill

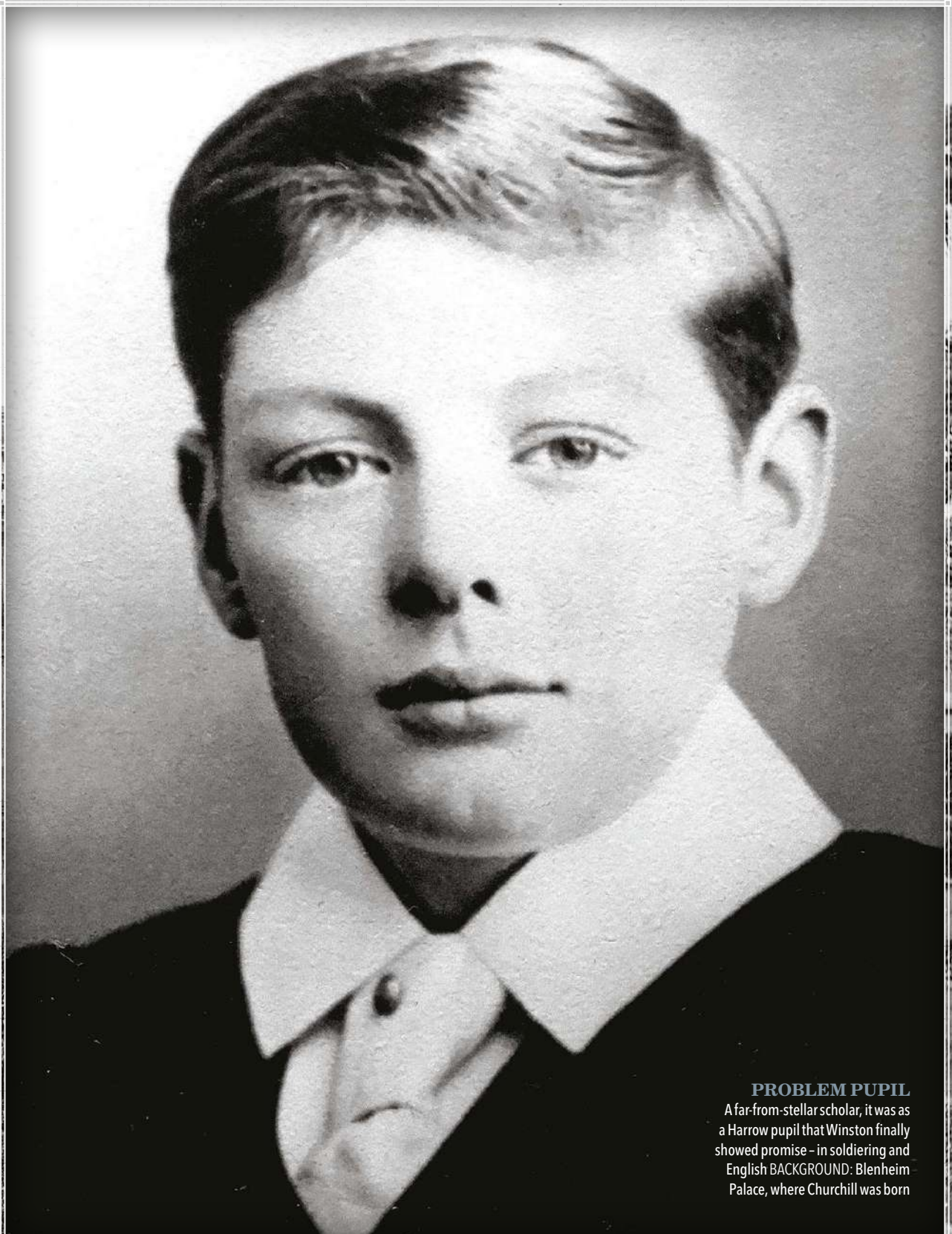
# EARLY LIFE

The son of aloof aristocrats, Winston was a “very naughty” schoolboy who was devastated by two bereavements. Nonetheless, he was determined to make a success of himself

BY CHARLOTTE HODGMAN







#### **PROBLEM PUPIL**

A far-from-stellar scholar, it was as a Harrow pupil that Winston finally showed promise – in soldiering and English

BACKGROUND: Blenheim Palace, where Churchill was born



**O**n 30 November 1874, Blenheim Palace, the historic Oxfordshire home of the dukes of Marlborough, echoed to the squalls of a newborn baby. The infant screaming his way into the world was Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill, the first child of Conservative politician Lord Randolph Churchill and the American-born socialite Jennie Jerome.

Winston's arrival in a small side room off the great hall came as something of a surprise, two months earlier than anticipated and just seven months after his parents' wedding. His early birth did not

go unnoticed, with many questioning whether Jennie had been pregnant before her marriage. Winston later took great delight in the speculation surrounding his birth, allegedly declaring "Although present on the occasion, I have no clear recollection of the events leading up to it".

For the first five years of his life, Winston was an only child but saw little of his parents, whose social and political affairs occupied them constantly. Care of Winston was left to a nanny, Elizabeth Everest, hired when he was just a few months old and referred to affectionately as 'Woom' or 'Woomany'. Winston adored Everest, a woman who, in many ways, fulfilled the role of parent for him:

**“A disastrous entrance exam placed him in the lowest class possible, much to the disgust of his father”**

“My nurse was my confidante. Mrs Everest it was who looked after me and tended all my wants. It was to her I poured out my many troubles,” he later wrote in his autobiography.

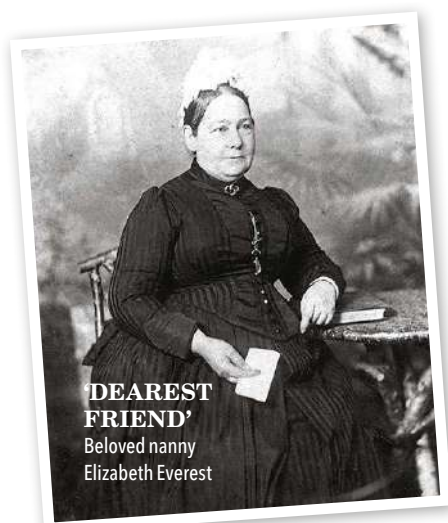
In 1880, Winston's brother John (known as Jack) was born, and the two brothers formed a close relationship that would last all their lives. But Winston's life was to change dramatically when, a few weeks before his eighth birthday, he was sent to St George's, a boarding school near Ascot in Berkshire.

## RELUCTANT PUPIL

Winston hated school from the start. “It appeared that I was to go away from home for many weeks at a stretch in order to do lessons under masters... After all I was only seven, and I had been so happy in my nursery with all my toys. I had such wonderful toys... Now it was to be all lessons,” he later recalled. Winston's independent spirit was at odds with the strict discipline of school, and he was often caned by his teachers for his wilful and rebellious behaviour.

Unwilling to engage with subjects that did not interest him, an increasingly unhappy and lonely Winston was deemed to have little to offer academically. A school report from 1883 describes him as being “very naughty”, “weak” in geography, “good” in history, but possessing “very elementary” drawing skills. After only two years at St George's, Winston was moved to a school near Brighton. Run by two sisters who believed in teaching with kindness and sympathy, Winston's school life improved dramatically and he was able to learn things that interested him, including French, history, poetry, horse riding and swimming.

It was at Harrow, his third and final boarding school, that Winston's future abilities began to show. A disastrous entrance exam saw him placed in the lowest class possible – much to the disgust of his father – but it was here that his talent for memorising lines (something he would deploy with great effect in his wartime speeches) emerged. He entered, and won, a school prize for being able to recite 1,200 lines from the poem *Lays of Ancient Rome* and began to focus on his English classes. It was at Harrow, too, that an interest in soldiering became apparent and he soon enrolled in the school's rifle



**‘DEAREST FRIEND’**  
Beloved nanny  
Elizabeth Everest



## IN THE NURSERY

LEFT: Four-year-old Winston with his mother, American socialite Jennie Jerome Churchill ABOVE: About to be sent to boarding school, aged seven





### LOST FATHER

Winston craved his father Randolph's approval and was devastated by his early death, aged 45

corps and won the public schools' fencing championship in 1892.

### STUDENT TO SOLDIER

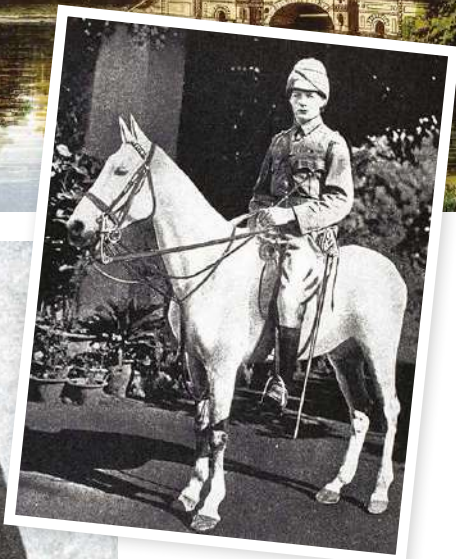
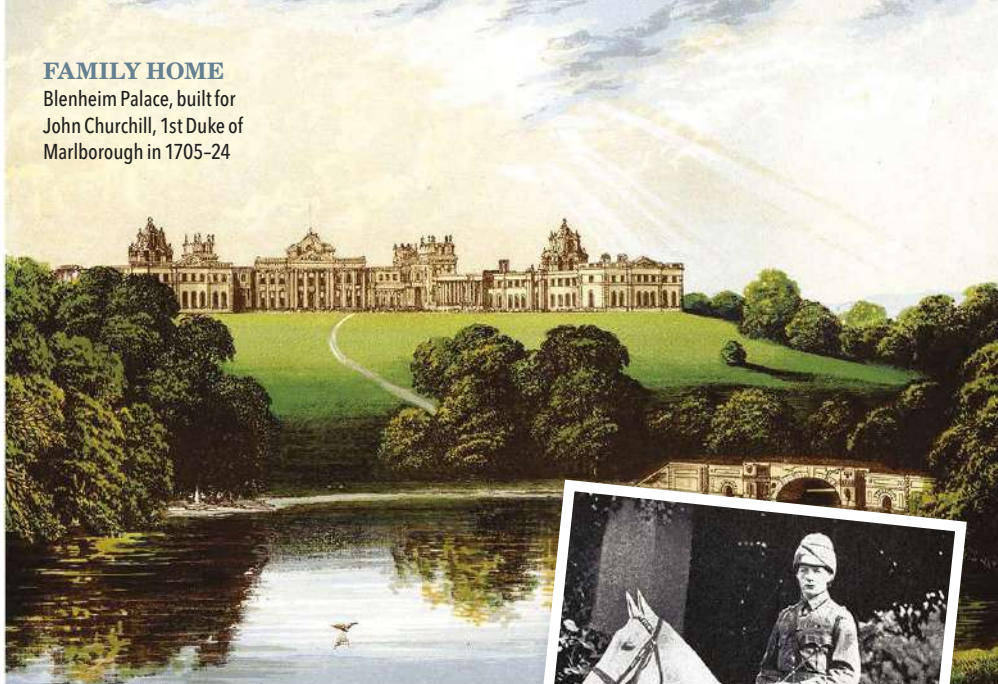
As Winston grew into a young man, the family's thoughts inevitably turned towards his future. Despite visiting his son at Harrow only once, Lord Randolph, encouraged by his son's interest in military matters, supported his enrolment into an academic programme at Harrow that would prepare him for entrance to Sandhurst Royal Military College. Academic disappointment was to strike again, however, when Winston twice failed Sandhurst's entrance exam. Although he was successful on his third attempt, his lack of mathematical prowess prevented him from joining the artillery and engineers, and he was also refused entry to the infantry.

Nonetheless determined to launch his military career, and with a lifelong love of horses, Winston chose instead to join the cavalry. Lord Randolph was furious and wrote his son a blistering letter expressing his disappointment and fury. "You have failed to get into the 60th rifles, one of the finest regiments in the army," he wrote. "[As a cavalry cadet] you have imposed on me an extra charge of some £200 a year... if you cannot prevent yourself from leading the idle useless unprofitable life you have shown in your schooldays and later months, you will... degenerate into a shabby, unhappy and futile existence."

Winston, who adored his mother and father, despite their emotional distance, was devastated by his father's words. Little did he know, however, that Lord Randolph was dying, probably from the later stages of syphilis. On 24 January 1895, just weeks after seeing his 20-year-old son leave Sandhurst as a cavalry officer in the 4th Hussars, Lord Randolph died.

### FAMILY HOME

Blenheim Palace, built for John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough in 1705-24



### MILITARY PROMISE

ABOVE: As a cavalry officer in 1897. Churchill had a lifelong love of horses  
LEFT: Aged 22, with brother John (standing) and their widowed mother

Winston raced across a snow-covered Grosvenor Square to reach his ailing father and later wrote of the terrible pain he experienced at his father's death: "All my dreams of comradeship with him, of entering parliament at his side and in his support, were ended. There remained for me only to pursue his aims and vindicate his memory."

More heartache was to follow with the death of Mrs Everest less than six months later. As he had done for his father, Winston dashed to be with his beloved former nanny, sitting beside her as she died. "She had been my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole twenty years I had lived," he would later recall. "I shall never know such a friend again."

Fresh out of Sandhurst, where he had graduated 20th out of 130, but still grieving deeply, Winston turned to his

mother for career advice, longing to get himself posted to any battlefield. Jennie took on the role with gusto, using her many social and political connections to help her son progress. She would continue to use her influence to advance Winston's career, even interrupting her honeymoon with second husband George Cornwallis-West to help with his election campaign in Oldham in 1900.

Born into the aristocracy, but supposedly lacking the academic ability that would have seen him attend university, few would have predicted that the naughty schoolboy who was weak at geography, or the would-be soldier who failed his Sandhurst entrance exams, would become Britain's greatest wartime leader. But by the end of the 19th century it was clear that Winston's finest hours were very much ahead of him. ●

## Becoming Churchill

# JOURNALIST AND SOLDIER

Descended from a long line of charismatic politicians, Churchill was destined for a life in parliament. But his drive, fearlessness and boundless ambition saw him take a path into politics full of extraordinary adventure and derring-do

BY JONNY WILKES



### RISK TAKER

As a young soldier, Churchill saw action in Cuba, India, Sudan and Egypt

The results of the Oldham by-election of summer 1899 were in, and Winston Churchill had lost. The 24-year-old Conservative party candidate may have been standing for the first time – and the palace-born aristocrat's chosen constituency was a northern industrial mill town – but he never doubted that this would be the beginning of an illustrious parliamentary career.

Both his grandfather and his father had served as cabinet ministers and, as a dashing, ambitious, brilliant speaker, Churchill campaigned with the intensity and hubris that would later become emblematic of the man. So to lose, albeit narrowly, was a bitter setback for his political aspirations. Needing to build his reputation further before he could run for office again, he went back to his life as a journalist and soldier.

### THIRST FOR ADVENTURE

Across the globe in South Africa, trouble was brewing. Dutch settlers – known as

'Boers' – were becoming increasingly hostile to Britain's imperial influence. Three days after the Boers declared war on Britain in October 1899, Churchill boarded a ship as war correspondent for the *Morning Post*. Such was his eagerness that he shared the voyage with commander-in-chief of the British forces, General Sir Redvers Henry Buller.

Churchill always seemed in a rush with his soldiering career. Since graduating from Sandhurst military academy and joining the 4th Hussars in 1895, he had already seen action in Cuba, India, Sudan and Egypt. He endured the horrors of combat and damning criticisms by fellow officers for being a 'medal hunter' – one reporter had even dubbed him "Pushful the Younger" – all so he could make his name on his way to political office. As he told his mother: "It is a fine game to play – the game of politics – and it is well worth a good hand before really plunging."

To that end, Churchill wrote eloquent reports of his military experiences, the success of which brought wealth and a sought-after reputation among the newspapers. The contract he secured with

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES



## MP IN WAITING

After losing his first election, Churchill's audacious defence of an armoured train and escape from a prison during the Boer War transformed his political fortunes







**PRESS PACK**  
Churchill, as reporter for the *Morning Post* (centre), alongside other Boer War correspondents



**WRITING HOME**  
Churchill's vivid dispatches from South Africa caused a sensation back in Britain

the *Morning Post* made him the highest-paid war correspondent of the time. He arrived at Cape Town intent on reaching the front swiftly, striking out ahead of the main force towards Ladysmith. When the Boers laid siege to the town, in one of their many early victories against the might of the British empire, his only chance of getting closer became the reconnaissance missions on armoured trains.

Although steel-plated, these trains offered the Boers an easy target. They were noisy, sent smoke signals visible for miles and, most importantly, were confined to their track. "Nothing looks more formidable and impressive than an armoured train," wrote Churchill, "but nothing is in fact more vulnerable and helpless." Nevertheless, having been invited along by a friend, he joined a reconnaissance expedition from Frere to Chieveley on the morning of 15 November.

While rumbling along its conspicuous course across the grasslands, the train fell prey to an ambush. The Boers piled boulders on the line causing a few carriages to derail, and opened fire with rifles and artillery. Surrounded, and with men dying around him, Churchill demonstrated calm, courage and leadership over the next 70 minutes as he took over the

defences. "Keep cool, men. This will be interesting for my paper," he purportedly yelled. From his orders, the line was cleared and the rest of the train loaded with wounded so it could move to safety.

The Boers eventually closed in and Churchill, having left his Mauser pistol behind, was forced to surrender, supposedly to General Louis Botha himself (another future prime minister). Churchill and the other survivors were taken to a prisoner of war camp in Pretoria, which hardly proved an arduous confinement. Housed in a converted school, prisoners could buy newspapers, cigarettes and alcohol, and were permitted to draw maps

showing the war's progress, with red markers for British and blue for Boer.

Yet the impatient Churchill struggled, and after just 27 days of captivity he escaped. Before jumping the wall near the latrines on 12 December, he left a letter to Louis de Souza, the Boer's undersecretary of war, announcing his intention and thanking him for his civility.

## GREAT ESCAPE

Churchill set out alone, without a map or compass and just four bars of chocolate and a "crumbling biscuit", plus what he could steal. Jumping on freight trains or walking at night along the tracks, he embarked on a 300-mile journey to friendly territory, while the Boers put a £25 price on his head, dead or alive. Back home, the escape caused a sensation in the press, keen for any good news from South Africa.

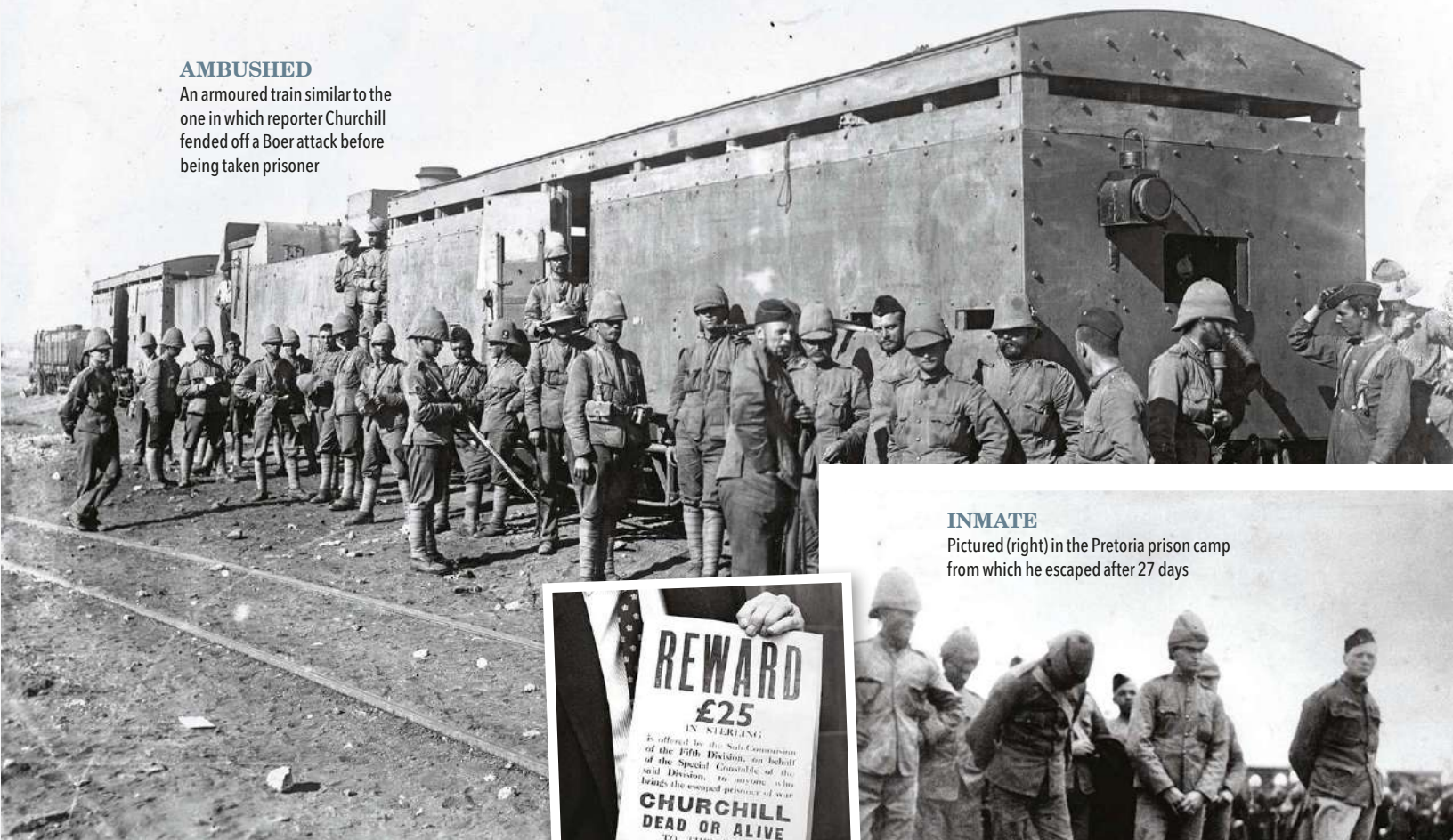
But just as the nation declared him a hero, things were growing desperate for the journalist. Hungry and thirsty, Churchill had little choice but to take a remarkable risk and knock on the door of a remote farm, armed only with an unconvincing story. If the owner was a Boer, he would have been handed over, but luckily it was an English miner, John Howard, who had heard of the young

**"Back home, Churchill's escape caused a sensation in the press. The nation declared him a hero"**



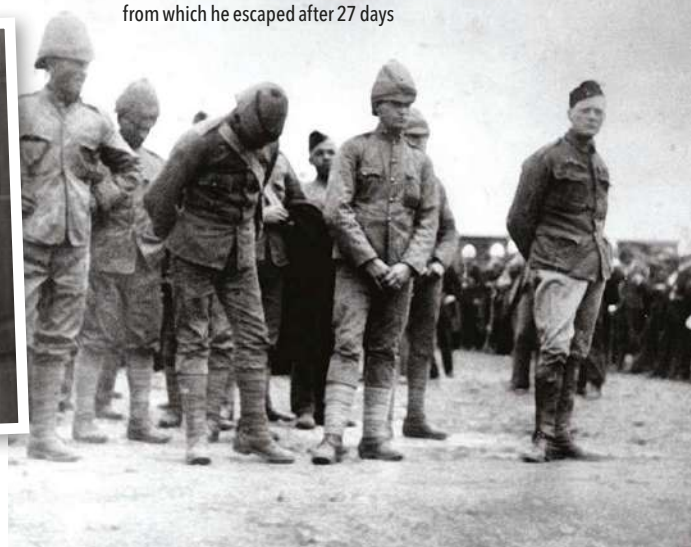
## AMBUSHED

An armoured train similar to the one in which reporter Churchill fended off a Boer attack before being taken prisoner



## INMATE

Pictured (right) in the Pretoria prison camp from which he escaped after 27 days



## WANTED

The Boers put a price on the escapee's head

soldier's daring escapades and hid him in a mine shaft.

The next thing was to smuggle Churchill aboard a train heading across the border into Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). One of the men helping, Daniel Dewsnap, hailed from Oldham – the town where Churchill had unsuccessfully run for office in 1899. As they stowed the fugitive on the train, he whispered: "They'll all vote for you next time." So it was hidden among sacks of wool that Churchill made it to freedom, dispatching a simple message to Howard reading, "Goods arrived safely".

Churchill's war had not quite finished. Over the next six months, he took part in the infamous British defeat at Spion Kop, joined the relief of Ladysmith and was among the first to enter Pretoria, where he received the surrender of the guards at his former prison camp. But his sights were now away from the military and on fulfilling Dewsnap's prediction.

In July 1900, Churchill returned to Britain, returned to Oldham and returned to politics just in time for a general election. This time, following a fiercely fought campaign, he was victorious. At the age of 25, he had set out on the road to Downing Street, via South Africa. ●

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## CELEBRITY MP

Churchill's dramatic exploits helped secure his victory in Oldham in the 1900 General Election



96 C

RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, M.P. & HIS FIANCÉE, MISS CLEMENTINE HOZIER.

ROTARY PHOTO. E.C.

#### 1908: WHIRLWIND ROMANCE

Churchill met future wife Clementine Hozier at a party in 1904 where the usually talkative politician was rendered tongue-tied in her presence. Four years later their paths crossed again and this time Cupid's arrow struck.

A few months later, Churchill proposed at Blenheim Palace

## Photo Album

# HUSBAND AND FATHER

Behind his image as the consummate politician, in his private life Churchill was a doting father of five, with an enviably solid 56-year marriage

BY CHARLOTTE HODGMAN



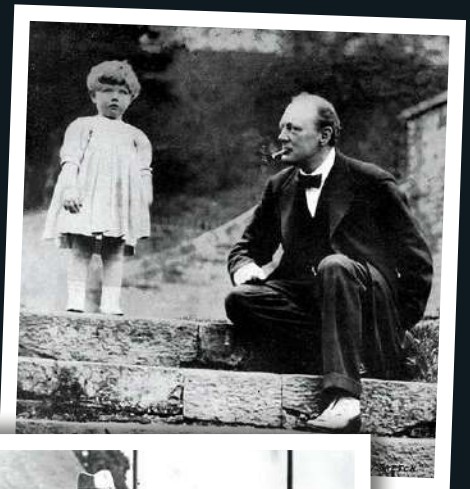


**c1912:  
FASHIONABLE  
COUPLE**

The 37-year-old MP for Dundee and first lord of the Admiralty relaxes with 'Clemmie' (as he affectionately called her) on the beach at Sandwich in Kent

**c1924: AT CHARTWELL**

With youngest child Mary, born in September 1922 - the month that Churchill bought his country house, Chartwell. After its total renovation, the family moved in in April 1924



**1915: FIRST BORN**

The couple's first two children, Diana (left) and Randolph (centre), with a cousin at a society wedding. The Churchills nicknamed their son 'the Chum Bolly' and Diana 'Puppy-Kitten', an amalgam of their private names for each other, 'Pug' (Winston) and 'Clemmy Kat' (Clementine)



**1928: MUCKING IN**

Churchill enlists his daughters Sarah and Mary to help build a wall at Chartwell in Kent



**1926:**

**SIDE BY SIDE**

Churchill, now chancellor of the exchequer, heads to parliament with Clemmie and oldest children Randolph and Diana at his side



**1936: ART THERAPY**

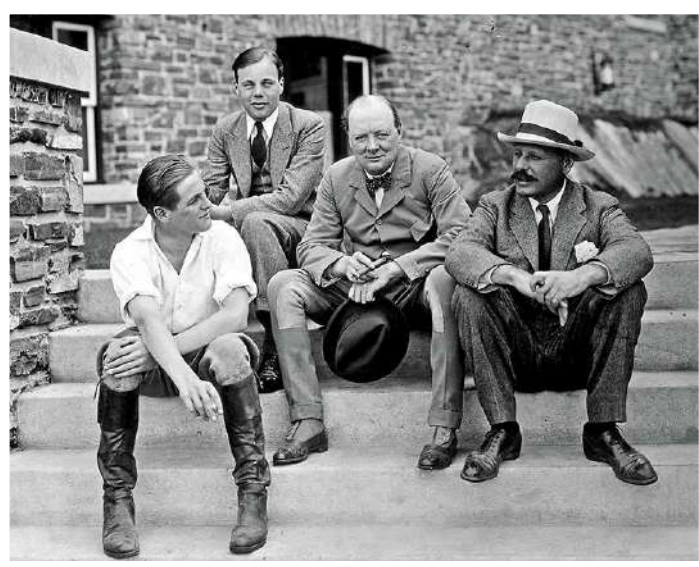
Holidaying at Château St-Georges-Motel in Normandy, Churchill indulges his passion for painting. It was a pastime he only discovered in his forties, but he went on to produce over 500 works



**1929:**

**FATHERS AND SONS**

Winston is pictured with his son Randolph (left), his brother Major John Churchill (right) and nephew John (back)



Churchill's painting of the French town of Carcassonne (1930). He found painting a great stress-reliever and remedy for his dark moods

MARY EVANS/GETTY IMAGES. PAINTINGS BY SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF ANTHEA MORTON-SANER ON BEHALF OF CHURCHILL HERITAGE LTD. COPYRIGHT (C) CHURCHILL HERITAGE LTD. PHOTO: C.215 CARCASSONNE - MARINA BROUNGER



### 1940: POWER COUPLE

"He always came first, second and third," Mary Churchill said of her mother's devotion to her father's life and career. An unwavering supporter during his toughest times, Clemmie was also one of the few people to stand up to him



With Rufus, one of the pets that helped lift Churchill's mood during his bouts of depression

### BATTLE WITH 'THE BLACK DOG'

While Churchill enjoyed immense achievements in his political career, behind the scenes he also fought a lifelong battle with depression. As his daughter Sarah wrote: "Despite his eulogies, accolades and honours, Winston still had a void in his heart... which no achievement or honour could completely fulfill."

'The black dog', as he labelled his depression, would leave him bleakly struggling to face the world. He even avoided the edges of balconies or ships because of the temptation to jump. These dark episodes gave way to periods of manic activity in which he worked restlessly through the night. In 1911 he wrote to Clementine: "My black dog... seems quite away from me now - it is such a relief. All the colours come back into the picture." And pictures did indeed help: "happy are the painters," he said of his mood-boosting pastime, which, along with laying bricks and spending time with his pet dogs, pigs and birds at Chartwell, helped him combat his depression.

He was also touched by personal tragedy. His father's death, at 45, seemed to propel him to compress a life's work into what might be a similarly short span. Later, the Churchills suffered the loss of their fourth child Marigold from septicaemia, aged two.



### 1951: DOWN TIME

Relaxing in the garden at Chartwell with five of their grandchildren, in the year that Churchill - at 76, an age when most people would be embracing retirement - became Britain's prime minister for a final time



### GALLIPOLI TRAGEDY

British troops scattered across the coastline of the Gallipoli peninsula. Churchill's plan to knock the Ottomans out of the war was an abject disaster, with over 140,000 Allied casualties





Becoming Churchill

# WINSTON'S FIRST WORLD WAR

Gung ho and eager for excitement and acclaim, Churchill greeted the First World War with relish. But while the conflict brought high office and heroics, it was also the scene of his most devastating failure

BY SPENCER MIZEN

**O**ne day in late 1915, a German shell soared over no-man's land and slammed into a British dugout where Winston Leonard Spencer

Churchill was sitting... just minutes earlier. Had he not just been called away to meet one of his fellow officers, the German shell would probably have blown him to pieces. How different might Britain's 20th century have been if he hadn't received the call.

That this most celebrated of all Britons, the man who later led his nation to victory over the Nazis in the Second World War, found himself holed up in a dark, damp trench in the midst of the First, may come as a surprise to many people. It would have been even more of a surprise to the man himself – this was certainly not how Churchill envisaged his role in the First World War playing out.

## FIRED UP FOR THE FIGHT

When hostilities erupted between Britain and Germany in August 1914, the 39-year-old was very much *the* rising force in British politics. He had already proven himself on the battlefield, courtesy of his part in the daring rescue of an ambushed train during the Boer War. He had also occupied two of the highest offices of state, first home secretary and now first lord of the Admiralty. And through his veins pumped the blood of his feted ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, who had famously defeated the French at the battle of Blenheim in 1704.

Surely, then, it would be the First World War – not one 25 years later – that would secure his berth in the pantheon of great wartime leaders. Yet, as Churchill would discover in a rollercoaster of experiences from 1914 to 1918, pride is often followed by a fall.

If there was one similarity between Churchill's experience of the First World War and the Second, it was that he was under no illusions as to the need to resist Germany. Of all the members of prime minister Herbert Asquith's cabinet in early 1914, he was most alive to the threat posed by German forces, and successfully campaigned for the largest naval expenditure in British history. When war came, he was ready.

In fact, as the chimes of Big Ben rang out on 4 August 1914, signalling the commencement of hostilities, Churchill appears to have felt energised. Asquith's wife reported seeing him "with a happy face striding towards the double doors of

the cabinet room". Churchill admitted as much himself, writing to his wife, Clemmie: "While everything tends towards catastrophe and collapse, I am interested, geared up and made happy."

Churchill regarded the coming conflict as an opportunity to establish his credentials as a natural warrior, a born leader. He yearned to leave his mark on the war, to be in the thick of the action. And, in October 1914, with German troops bearing down on the Belgian city of Antwerp, he got his chance. The city's capitulation was all but inevitable, but Churchill quickly realised that the longer Antwerp held out, the more time the Allies had to shore up their positions between the city and the Channel coast. And so he threw himself into its defence, commissioning scores of London buses to ferry troops to the front, and then joining them there himself. Journalists reported seeing him smoking large cigars while under shrapnel fire.

Antwerp fell and more than 1,000 experienced British troops were captured. But a priceless six-day delay in the German advance had been bought.

If Churchill believed that the events of Antwerp were a sign of things to come – where rapid attacks, off-the-cuff initiatives and heroic defiance were the order of the day – he was to be sorely disappointed. The war on the western front quickly descended into a bloody, immobile stand-off.

To a restless, impatient showman like Churchill, this stalemate was anathema. Unable to take the fight to the Germans, he turned into a one-man ideas factory – championing greater coordination between Britain's land, air and naval forces, and pushing for armoured cars to protect airfields. He even became a leading advocate of trench-crossing 'land-ships' (later christened 'tanks').

Yet, for all the variety – and, often, brilliance – of Churchill's ideas, they weren't enough to sate his thirst for action,

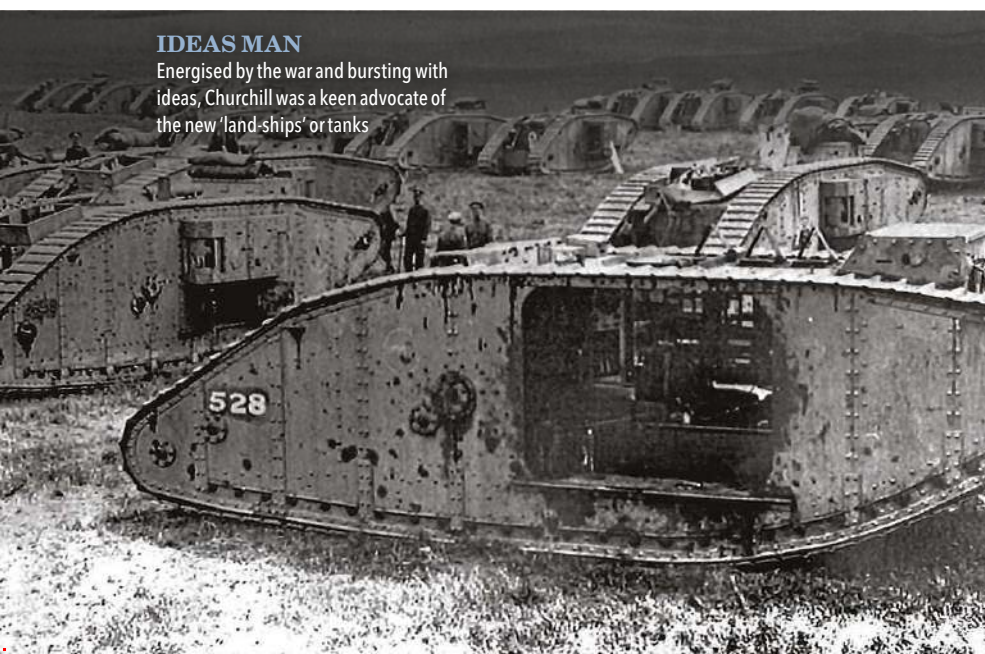
and glory. "My dear prime minister," he wrote to Asquith in late 1914, "are there not other alternatives to sending our armies to chew barbed wire in Flanders?" It was a

loaded question because, to Churchill's eye, there *was* an alternative –

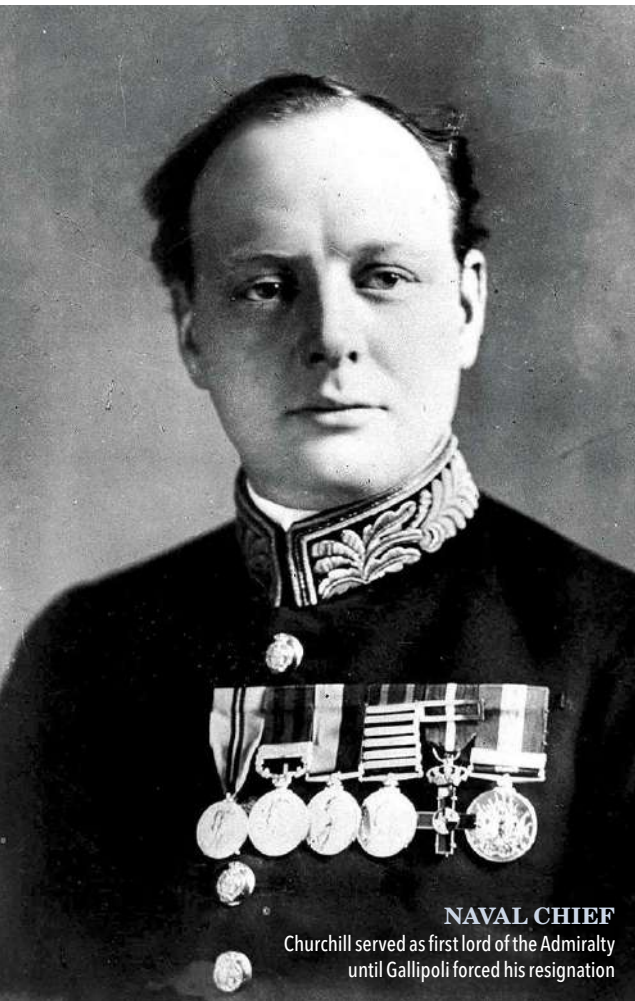
**"Churchill saw the conflict as an opportunity to establish his credentials as a natural warrior, a born leader"**

## IDEAS MAN

Energised by the war and bursting with ideas, Churchill was a keen advocate of the new 'land-ships' or tanks







#### NAVAL CHIEF

Churchill served as first lord of the Admiralty until Gallipoli forced his resignation

and it lay in the south-eastern corner of Europe.

This was the homeland of the Ottomans, another of Britain's great enemies in the First World War. The Ottomans had once ruled a mighty empire, encompassing vast swathes of eastern Europe and western Asia. But now, plagued by internal unrest, they were a rapidly fading force. It was on this perceived weakness that Churchill based one of the war's most ambitious, and disastrous, undertakings – one that would expose him to national ridicule and almost end his political career for good: the Gallipoli campaign.

#### DARDANELLES DISASTER

Churchill reasoned that a strike at the heart of Ottoman power was the key to finding a way around the gridlock of the trenches. The plan he presented to the prime minister encompassed sending an Allied fleet up the Dardanelles strait

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## THE SIEGE OF SIDNEY STREET

Churchill reveals his love of the limelight

From the moment he entered politics, the young Winston Churchill displayed an uncanny ability to cause a stir and horrify the more conservative elements of the British establishment. No episode demonstrates this better than London's Sidney Street Siege of January 1911. This was an extraordinary incident involving anarchists and immigrants, burglary and murder – not to mention a gun battle waged on the streets of London. And yet somehow Churchill managed to muscle in on the headlines.

The drama began in December 1910, when three police officers were shot dead after disturbing a burglary at a jeweller's shop in Houndsditch. The thieves scattered and, soon after, the authorities announced that they believed that eastern European anarchists were behind the crime.

On 2 January, acting on a tip-off, the police caught up with their quarry at 100 Sidney Street in Stepney in London's East End, but were met with firing from inside the building and forced to retreat and surround the building. Churchill, then home secretary, was informed of the developing siege while in the bath. Minutes later, he was rushing

to Sidney Street to watch the drama unfold for himself.

On his arrival, Churchill authorised the deployment of troops to the scene. All the while, he was captured on film – shown that evening in a West End theatre – gesticulating to police a few metres away from the besieged building.

With soldiers and police laying down successive volleys of gunfire, there could be no escape for the gunmen inside, and the bodies of two men, Fritz Svaars and William Sokolow, were later pulled from the burning building.

The siege was over but, for Churchill, the controversy was only beginning. For many of his political opponents, his determination to be at the heart of the action stood as confirmation of his rashness and lack of judgment. "I understand what the photographer was doing, but what was the right honourable gentleman doing?" asked the Conservative opposition leader, Arthur Balfour.

Even Churchill appears to have realised he had overstepped the mark, describing his decision to rush to Sidney Street as the result of "a strong sense of curiosity which perhaps it would have been well to keep in check".



Churchill at the East End siege. He was criticised for rashly heading to the scene





## FIGHTING ON

Following his ignominious failure at Gallipoli, Churchill returned to the army

(which separated the Asian part of Turkey from mainland Europe) and landing an army on the Gallipoli peninsula. This force would then advance north and, in concert with Britain's Russian allies, capture the Ottoman capital of Constantinople, so knocking the Ottomans out of the war.

Churchill's plan met with opposition from his colleagues, but his zeal, energy and sheer force of personality bulldozed it through. He was confident that he'd come up with a masterpiece of ingenuity, daring and planning. But, the trouble was, this masterpiece far outstretched the military's capabilities, as thousands of Allied troops would soon learn to their cost.

From the moment an Allied naval force entered the Dardanelles on 19 February 1915, the campaign appeared to be cursed. Three battleships were sunk while trying to navigate their way up the straits under murderous Ottoman fire. The Allies suffered appalling casualties attempting to

put men ashore and, once they had managed to establish a foothold on the peninsula, they were quickly pinned down by Ottoman reinforcements. In a horrible twist of irony for Churchill, the Gallipoli campaign soon descended into the very thing it was designed not to be – a blood-splattered, trench-based slog. And it was one that, when the campaign was called off in January 1916, had cost at least 46,000 Allied lives. "Damn the Dardanelles," wrote the veteran naval leader Jacky Fisher to Churchill. "They'll be our grave." This was a view held among many observers back in Britain.

Churchill's fierce individualism, disdain for convention and eye for self-promotion had made him some powerful enemies over the past decade. And now, with the debacle of the Dardanelles casting a long shadow over his reputation, these enemies struck.

With his government severely weakened by events in south-eastern Europe, Liberal Prime Minister Asquith was cornered into forming a coalition government with the Conservatives. As part of that deal, Churchill's head was served up on a plate. He was relieved of his duties as first lord of the Admiralty and forced to take a minor role in government. For a man who loved the limelight, who thrived in the white heat of high office, it was the cruellest of blows.

"I thought he would never get over the Dardanelles; I thought he would die of grief," wrote Clemmie. "I am the victim of a political intrigue," he told her. "I am finished in respect of all I care for." He was almost right. But not quite.

Though he spent some time licking his wounds on a Surrey farm, a quiet

retirement in the countryside was simply not the Churchill way. And so, with political rehabilitation out of his grasp, he decided to take the fight to the Germans in the trenches.

## REDEMPTION ON THE FRONT LINE

Churchill joined a troop train to the western front on 18 November 1915 and on 4 January 1916 was given command of the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers stationed in the southern section of the Ypres salient. An aristocrat and former home secretary he may have been, but that didn't stop him striking up a strong bond with his men. He was appalled by the conditions in the trenches and instantly set about ameliorating them, famously declaring "Now gentlemen, we are going to make war – on the lice!" and repeatedly badgering Clemmie for everything from corned beef and dried fruit to sardines and stilton cheese to feed his men.

But what impressed the rank and file most was his indifference to danger. He ventured out to no-man's land around 40 times to inspect the wire and listening posts. One of his men, Lieutenant Hakewell Smith, recalled: "He was like a baby elephant out in no-man's land at night. He never fell when a shell went off; he never ducked when a bullet went past with its loud crack."

Whitehall's corridors of power must have seemed a very long way away as the shells whistled over Churchill's

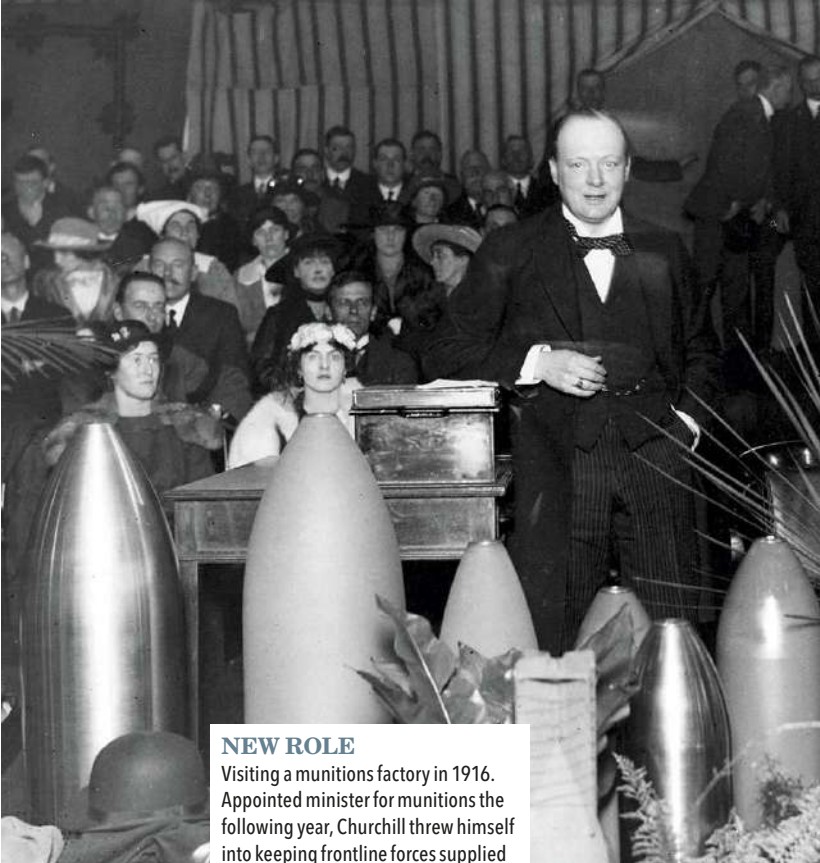
## DEADLY WATERS

HMS *Irresistible* lies stricken after hitting a mine in the Dardanelles in March 1915



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES





#### NEW ROLE

Visiting a munitions factory in 1916. Appointed minister for munitions the following year, Churchill threw himself into keeping frontline forces supplied



#### TURNING POINT

German PoWs near Amiens. Allied victory there was due in part to Britain's efficient munitions operation

head. But events were unfolding in the highest reaches of the British government that would bring his exile to an end.

The first card to fall in his favour was Asquith's replacement as prime minister by Churchill's old friend David Lloyd George. The second factor behind his rehabilitation was a more sinister one: the German U-boats' deadly campaign against Allied shipping that was threatening to starve Britain into submission. Lloyd George desperately needed someone with the drive and independence of thought to turn the tables on the enemy, and so, in July 1917, he appointed Churchill minister for munitions.

In essence, Churchill's new job was to furnish Britain's armed forces with all the weapons they needed to win the war. Based at Chateau Verchocq in northern France, he approached his task with vigour, setting ambitious targets for the production of planes and shells, and reforming Britain's inefficient industrial machine.

Such reforms couldn't come soon enough for, by spring 1918, the Germans were poised to launch a massive offensive on the western front – the brunt of which was to break over the British. Churchill was alive to the threat. "The crisis will come before June," he declared. "A defeat here will be fatal. I do not like the situation now developing."

He was right: the German Spring Offensive would indeed push the British

## "Churchill's war had begun with hubris, was punctuated by disaster and ended in triumph"

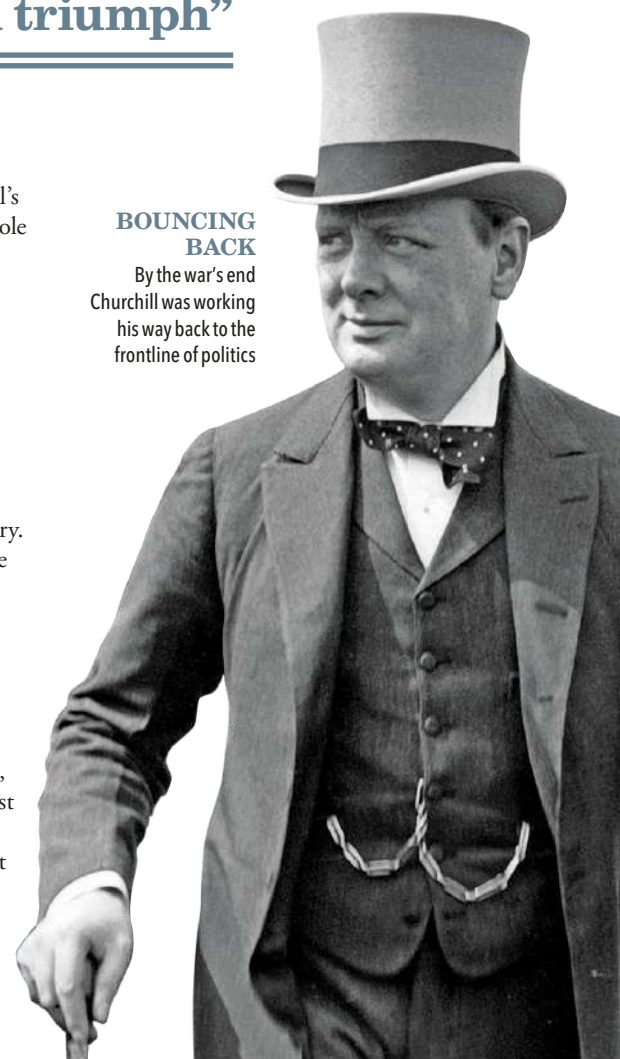
to the very limits of their endurance. But the tanks, guns and shells Churchill's ministry supplied would play a crucial role in the offensive's ultimate failure. They would prove more important still in the massive and ultimately war-winning Allied fightback that followed in the summer and autumn of 1918.

And when the advancing Allies delivered one of their most devastating blows to the Germans, at the battle of Amiens in August 1918, Churchill was there to witness it, and revel in the victory. "In some parts of the line there are at the moment no Germans left," he wrote to Clemmie. "There is no doubt that they [the British Army] have felt themselves abundantly supplied."

Churchill's First World War had begun with hubris and ambition, was punctuated by disaster and humiliation, and ended in triumph. It was the steepest of learning curves. But it was one that stood him in good stead for the moment Britain found itself fighting for its very survival once more. ●

#### BOUNCING BACK

By the war's end Churchill was working his way back to the frontline of politics



# THE WILDERNESS YEARS

In the 1930s, Churchill found himself out of government, out of favour and out of touch. Here are six ways that he was pushed to the political sidelines

BY JONNY WILKES

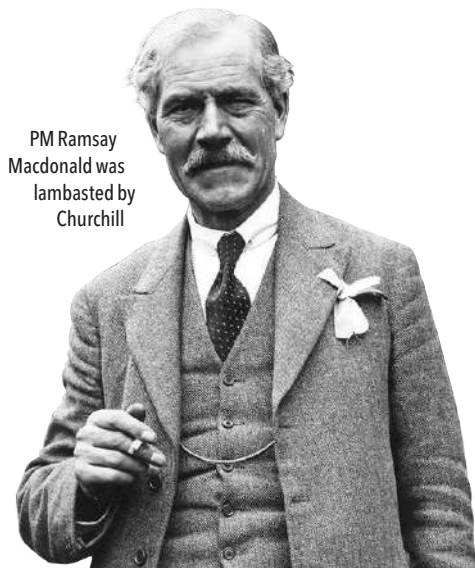
“ Sometimes **when fortune scowls**, she is preparing her most dazzling gifts ”



Churchill and his son Randolph (left) on the campaign trail in 1929

## 1 ALIENATING ALLIES

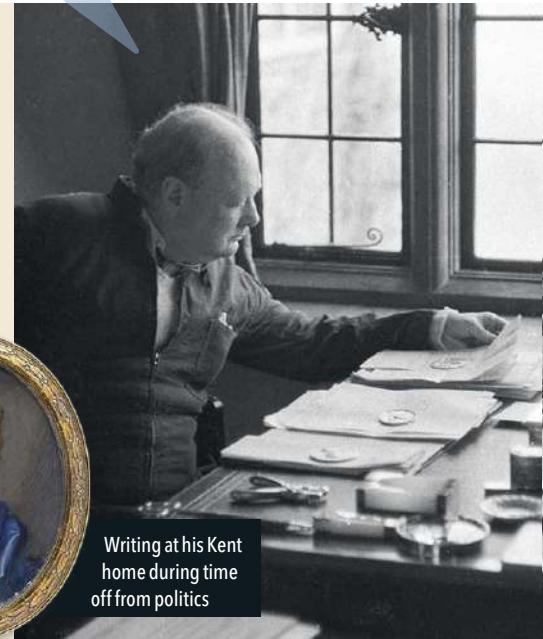
After the Conservative Party lost the 1929 general election, Churchill, the chancellor of the exchequer, **alienated most of his own party** by his aggressive opposition to the new Labour government. His marginalisation continued through 1931, when a multi-party coalition government formed and he was **not offered any cabinet position**. Of the new prime minister Ramsay MacDonald he commented that, as a child, he missed seeing 'The Boneless Wonder' at Barnum's circus, but "I have waited 50 years to see the boneless wonder sitting on the Treasury bench".



PM Ramsay MacDonald was lambasted by Churchill

## 2 PRIVATE PURSUITS

Out of the centre of power, Churchill poured much of his time and energy into the **lucrative business of writing**, including a biography of his ancestor John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough (pictured). "Sometimes when fortune scowls most spitefully, she is preparing her most dazzling gifts," he remarked in 1931. Although out of the spotlight, he remained influential both in the House of Commons, where he had a small but diehard cadre of supporters, and nationwide.



Writing at his Kent home during time off from politics

## 3 INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The chief issue that saw Churchill sidelined was the growing call for Indian independence. Only British rule, he argued often and loudly, could prevent divisions in the country that could lead to violence, so **granting independence would be "an act of cowardice, desertion and dishonour"**. As well as resigning from the shadow cabinet, he took shots at Gandhi too, saying: "The truth is that Gandhi-ism and everything it stands for will have to be grappled with and crushed."

“ The truth is that Gandhi-ism and everything it stands for will have to be **grappled with and crushed** ”



GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

"We should be rid of a bad man if he died," Churchill said of non-violent activist Gandhi



“Mussolini is the greatest lawgiver among living men”

#### 4 ABDICATION CRISIS

In 1936, King Edward VIII stated his desire to marry twice-divorced American Wallis Simpson, despite a torrent of disapproval from the Church of England and the government. Yet **ardent monarchist Churchill supported the marriage**. He was yelled down in the Commons, while rumours claimed he wanted to form a King's Party. After helping to **write Edward's abdication speech**, Churchill declared: "I should have been ashamed if, in my independent and unofficial position, I had not cast about for every lawful means, even the most forlorn, to keep him on the throne of his fathers."

#### 5 FOREIGN POLICIES

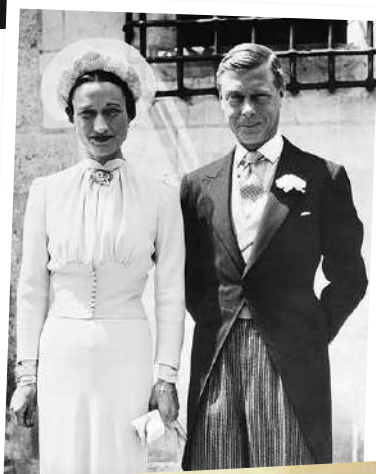
Churchill regularly quarrelled with his parliamentary colleagues on international matters. More concerned in these years with the **dangers of communism** than the rise of fascism, he opposed the League of Nations' condemnation of the Japanese invasion of the Chinese region of Manchuria in 1931, and in Spain's Civil War he **praised General Franco's fight against the "communist rebels"**. As late as 1937, Churchill still voiced **support for the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini**, whom in February 1933 he had described as "the greatest lawgiver among living men". His views about the leader would change significantly over time.



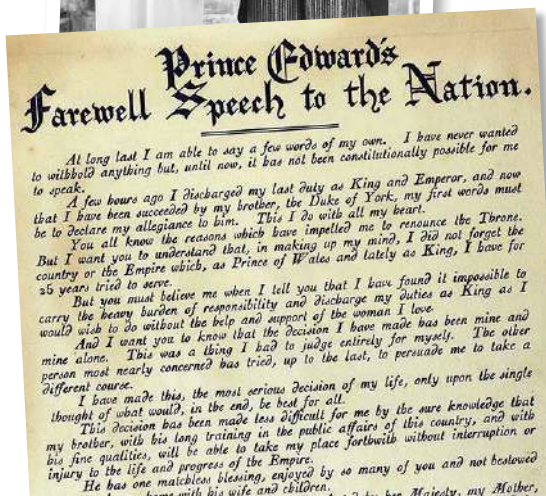
Churchill sided with Franco during the Spanish Civil War



GETTY IMAGES



Edward and Wallis marry in June 1937, the summer after his abdication



#### 6 RISE OF HITLER

With Churchill in the 'wilderness', his **constant warnings about Hitler and the threat of Nazi Germany largely went unheeded**. He emphasised the need to strengthen the Royal Air Force and create a ministry of defence, and aggressively resisted the 1938 Munich Agreement permitting Hitler to annex the Sudetenland in western Czechoslovakia. As prime minister Neville Chamberlain declared "peace for our time", Churchill responded with: "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. **You chose dishonour and you will have war.**" ●

Churchill with Chamberlain in 1939. The pair violently disagreed over the appeasement of Hitler







Churchill visits northern France in July 1944. His defiant stand against Hitler, and bold speeches to the British people, inspired the country to "never give in" to the Nazis

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# THE WAR YEARS

His darkest hour, the Atlantic  
alliance, his greatest speeches  
and the liberation of Europe





The War Years

# DAYS OF DESTINY

In May 1940, Hitler's invading army had pushed Britain to the brink of defeat. Over a few crucial days, Churchill's war cabinet weighed an immense question – whether to seek terms with Germany or keep fighting to the bitter end

BY ALLEN PACKWOOD

IWM ART LD 305 / GETTY IMAGES





**UP FOR THE FIGHT**

Churchill makes a stirring speech in April 1940. Within weeks he was prime minister and – as besieged British forces fled Dunkirk (background image), faced the bleak prospect of Britain's destruction



**I**t is 3pm on Monday 13 May 1940. Winston Churchill has just made a rousing speech, declaring that he has “nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat”, and has pledged himself to a policy of waging war “by sea, land and air” with the single aim of victory: “victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however hard and long the road may be.” This short speech is now seen as an iconic moment in British history. But our view of that moment is coloured by hindsight, and by the knowledge that victory was ultimately achieved. No such luxury was granted to Churchill and his audience at the time. The prime minister’s speech was lacking in detail, and his position was far from secure. In the short term, things would only get worse – much worse.

Although Churchill may seem the quintessential wartime leader, he very nearly missed out on the top job. When prime minister Neville Chamberlain resigned in May 1940, after support for him plummeted following wartime failures, many wanted foreign secretary Lord Halifax to take his place. Halifax was reluctant however, and the job fell to Churchill. He became prime minister on 10 May 1940, the very day that Hitler launched his blitzkrieg offensive against France and the Low Countries (the region

## “He had been prime minister just two weeks and was facing the possible destruction of his army”

consisting of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg). He was therefore not elected prime minister, but gained the position through a political coup from which he emerged as the only possible leader with the popular credibility and political ability to form a government.

True, Churchill’s long record of warnings about Nazi Germany – coupled with his obvious determination to take the fight to the enemy – had won him public and press support, but there were many throughout the corridors of power, and even within his own party, who regarded him with suspicion, as an opportunist and a maverick who might lead the country down the most dangerous paths. What’s more, he had no real political powerbase of his own, nor was he to be given any time to establish himself.

The military situation deteriorated faster and further than Churchill could possibly have anticipated. The Dutch were quickly overwhelmed, and streams of German tank divisions, supported by a ferocious aerial bombardment, had cut a swathe across the French countryside, reaching the coast and cutting off the French northern army and the British Expeditionary Force. Boulogne fell on 25 May and Calais was besieged. Churchill had only been prime minister for two weeks and was suddenly facing the possibility of the destruction of his army and the loss of his main ally.

### 26 May The French urge Churchill to seek salvation in Fascist Italy

By Sunday 26 May, it had become clear that the British Expeditionary Force was at risk of being annihilated, and would have to make a fighting retreat towards the

French port of Dunkirk. It was feared that this would be seen as an act of desertion by the French. French premier Paul Reynaud flew over to discuss the crisis with Churchill. The news he brought could not have been bleaker: the French had only 50 divisions against 150 German, and their supreme commander did not think that resistance could last long against a determined onslaught.

Reynaud felt that France’s only hope lay in an approach to Fascist Italy, still neutral but expected to declare war against the Allies at any moment. If Italy could be bought off, French troops might be released from the Italian border. However, in return for staying out of the war, Italy was expected to demand the demilitarisation of Malta and the neutralisation of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal – all territories under British control. Reynaud was asking Churchill to keep France in the war by making concessions to Italy.

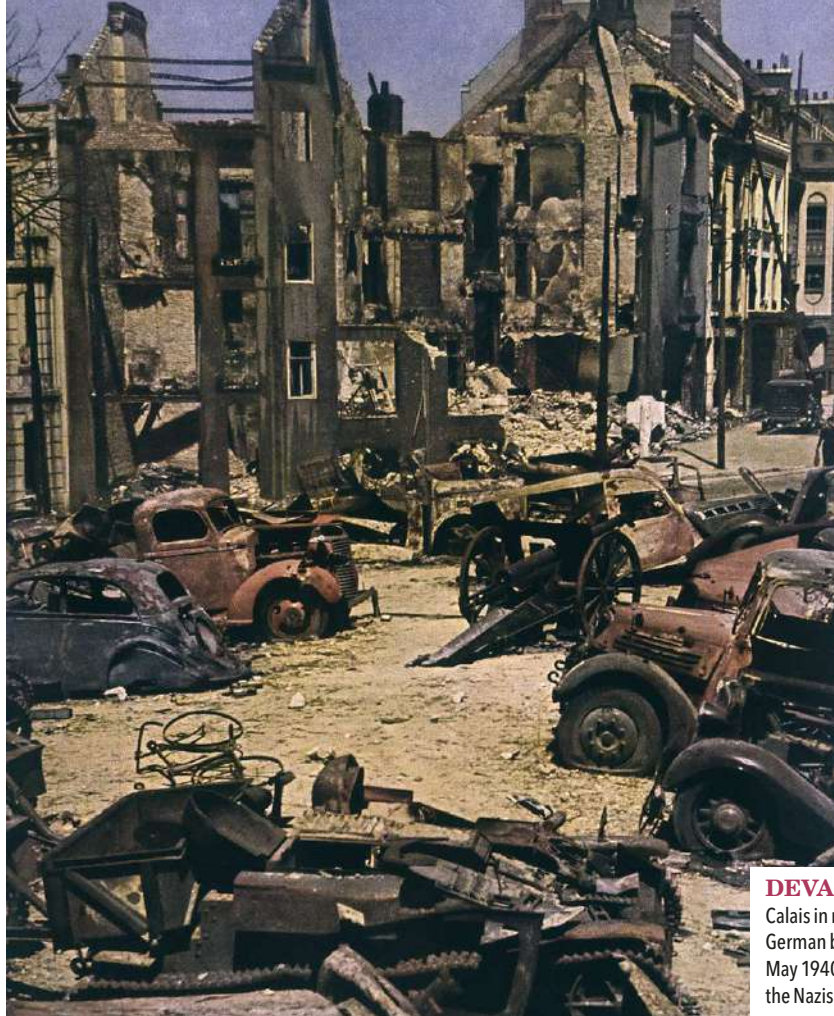
Churchill’s personal response to Reynaud was unequivocal: “We would rather go down fighting than be enslaved to Germany.” Yet when he reported this conversation to his war cabinet colleagues that afternoon, it was clear that not all of them shared such a black and white view. Britain’s foreign secretary – and Churchill’s main political rival – Lord Halifax favoured making an approach to Italy, arguing that it was not in Benito Mussolini’s interest to allow Hitler to dominate Europe, and that the Italian dictator might be able to persuade Hitler to take a more reasonable attitude. In other words, peace terms with Germany might be explored through Italy. While expressing doubt as to the value of any such approach, Churchill agreed that it should be further considered. The military situation was simply too uncertain to rule it out, and his priority remained getting British troops out of France. Politically he needed to carry his war cabinet with him on such a critical issue of national survival.

What Churchill could and did do was to control the process. As prime minister it fell to him to convene the meetings and set the agendas. The discussions about an approach to Mussolini were restricted to a small inner circle, who held three separate meetings to thrash out the issue. Everything hung on a few men, meeting in smoke-filled rooms, their concentration periodically broken by the latest news →

In a matter of days, Hitler’s invasion broke through French defensive lines and advanced to the coast of northwest Europe







#### DEVASTATION

Calais in ruins after German bombing in May 1940. France fell to the Nazis the next month



## WHAT HAPPENED AT DUNKIRK?

In May 1940, less than a year into the Second World War, Britain's troops found their backs against the wall. Following the rapid advance of Hitler's army across northern France, the Allies had been pushed back to the French coastal port of Dunkirk, with the Germans closing in rapidly. Faced with the possibility of a crippling defeat, Churchill decided to attempt a seemingly impossible feat - evacuate his army back to Britain across the English Channel. Alongside British Navy vessels, a flotilla of privately owned yachts, fishing boats and ferries sailed across the channel to help the soldiers, supported by the RAF flying overhead. A total of 198,000 British and 140,000 French and Belgian troops were saved.

Although the losses were significant - 50,000 didn't escape, of whom 11,000 died - the evacuation was undeniably a pivotal moment that allowed the Allies to keep on fighting. In a rousing speech calling the evacuation a "miracle of deliverance", Churchill played a large role in shaping the way Dunkirk was viewed - not as a humiliating retreat, but a victory snatched from the jaws of disaster.

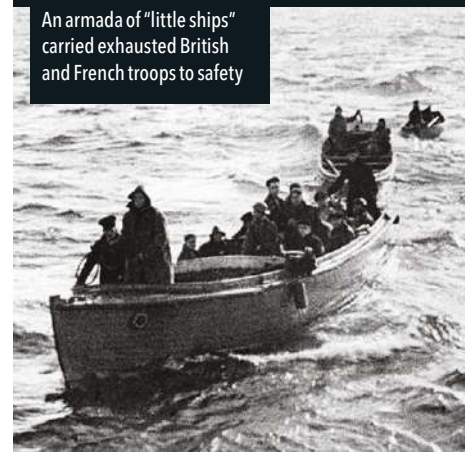
WORDS Ellie Cawthorne



#### FRENCH ALLY

With premier Paul Reynaud, who wanted to seek terms with Hitler via Italian mediation

An armada of "little ships" carried exhausted British and French troops to safety





from the front, their deliberations occurring against the backdrop of the evacuation of their soldiers from the French port of Dunkirk. The levels of stress are unimaginable, and it is not surprising if at times their words became heated and emotions ran high.

As discussions resumed on 26 May, battle lines were quickly drawn. Churchill was clear that Britain still had the power to resist an attack, and France should not be allowed to drag the country into a settlement with Germany which involved intolerable terms. Lord Halifax countered with cold logic and diplomatic language: he “was not quite convinced that the prime minister’s diagnosis was correct and that it was in Hitler’s interest to insist on outrageous terms”. Ultimately, said Halifax, if Britain could obtain terms that did not mean sacrificing its independence “we should be foolish if we did not accept them”. Churchill, on the other hand, was adamant that the only thing to do was to show Hitler that he could not conquer this country, but “at the same time, he did not raise objection to some approach being made to Signor Mussolini”.

## 27 May Churchill’s fighting talk pushes Halifax to the brink of resignation

When discussions resumed the following day in 10 Downing Street, secretary of state for air Archibald Sinclair was there to reinforce Churchill. It is tempting to speculate that the prime minister had brought Sinclair in especially for this purpose. He was a close personal friend – they had served together in the trenches in the First World War and Sinclair had once been Winston’s private secretary. He too argued against any negotiation, on the grounds that it would only undermine British morale and encourage their enemies.

At the heart of this meeting was a dramatic exchange between Churchill and Halifax. The prime minister, “increasingly oppressed with the futility of the suggested approach”, feared being forced into negotiations from which it would be impossible to turn back, and being “dragged down the slippery slope with France”. His subsequent remarks – including “If the worst came to the worst, it would not be a bad thing for this

country to go down fighting” – prompted Halifax to threaten to resign. He stated that he could no longer work with Churchill, and it took a private and unrecorded conversation in the garden to ease the tension between the two men.

Reminding the prime minister that just yesterday he had been prepared to consider terms that did not affect British independence, Halifax demanded to know whether, if Hitler were to offer peace terms, Churchill would discuss them. Here was a direct challenge to Churchill’s stated policy of waging war until final victory. Backing away from an open breach with Halifax, and unable to say that he would never negotiate, Churchill replied that “he would not join France in asking for terms; but if he were told what the terms offered were, he would be prepared to consider them.” It might

have seemed like a small victory for Halifax, or even an indication that Churchill was possibly wavering. But the foreign secretary was already losing his colleagues’ support.

Churchill expressed his preference for an approach to Mussolini from President Roosevelt, which would smack less of British weakness. He knew that the Dunkirk evacuations had begun and, that morning, his military chiefs of staff had confirmed that a German invasion of Britain could be resisted by the navy and the Royal Air Force, as long as British morale remained high. He also knew that nothing was more likely to reduce British morale than public knowledge of an approach to Italy for peace terms.

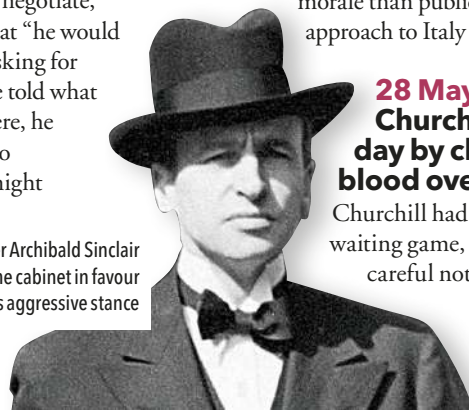
## 28 May Churchill wins the day by choosing blood over surrender

Churchill had been playing a waiting game, and had been careful not to alienate his



**STORMS AHEAD**  
Churchill pictured with Lord Halifax, who favoured negotiating terms with Hitler

Liberal leader Archibald Sinclair helped swing the cabinet in favour of Churchill’s aggressive stance





## TRAPPED

Thousands of Allied troops, forced to France's north coast, await rescue at Dunkirk in May 1940



## BELGIUM FALLS

A news seller announces Belgium's surrender after an 18-day Nazi onslaught in May 1940 – a blow that further solidified Churchill's resolve to fight on

colleagues. But, on Tuesday 28 May, he made his move. Faced with the need to respond to the latest news of the surrender of Belgium, and to prevent any fall in that all-important public morale, he moved the playing field to parliament. Declaring in the war cabinet that the chances of Britain receiving decent peace terms from Germany were 1,000 to 1 against, he expressed his view that “nations which went down fighting rose again, but those which surrendered tamely were finished”.

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

The tide may have been turning towards his view, but the issue was still unresolved. Seizing the moment, Churchill now addressed a wider group comprised of all his government ministers, regaling them with a powerful off-the-cuff speech in which he announced that he would rather go down “choking on his own blood” than entertain surrender. It was a brave and emotional performance that won

him an ovation from a hardened and usually cynical political audience. More crucially, it won their support for his policy of continuing to wage war. Leo Amery, secretary of state for India, was present and wrote that it “left all of us tremendously heartened by Winston’s resolution. He is a real war leader and one whom it is worthwhile serving under.” When the war cabinet meeting resumed immediately after Churchill’s rousing speech, it was clear that he had effectively won the argument against any exploration of negotiations. He had judged his moment well.

Did Churchill waver? His stance in 1940 has become part and parcel of the myth of Churchill as an uncompromising,

**“Churchill announced that he would rather go down ‘choking on his own blood’ than entertain surrender”**

cigar-chomping war leader. Yet reality, particularly in the chaos of war, was inevitably more nuanced. Churchill clearly wanted to fight on, but had to accept that there might be circumstances in which Britain would have to seek terms. Yet he was shrewd enough to know that he could not carry on alone. He had to ensure that his war cabinet colleagues, the chiefs of staff and the wider political establishment were behind him. It was only through doing so that he survived the first great test of his wartime leadership, helping to steer Britain away from a negotiated peace with Hitler and keep the nation fighting. ●



The War Years

# THE GREAT ORATOR

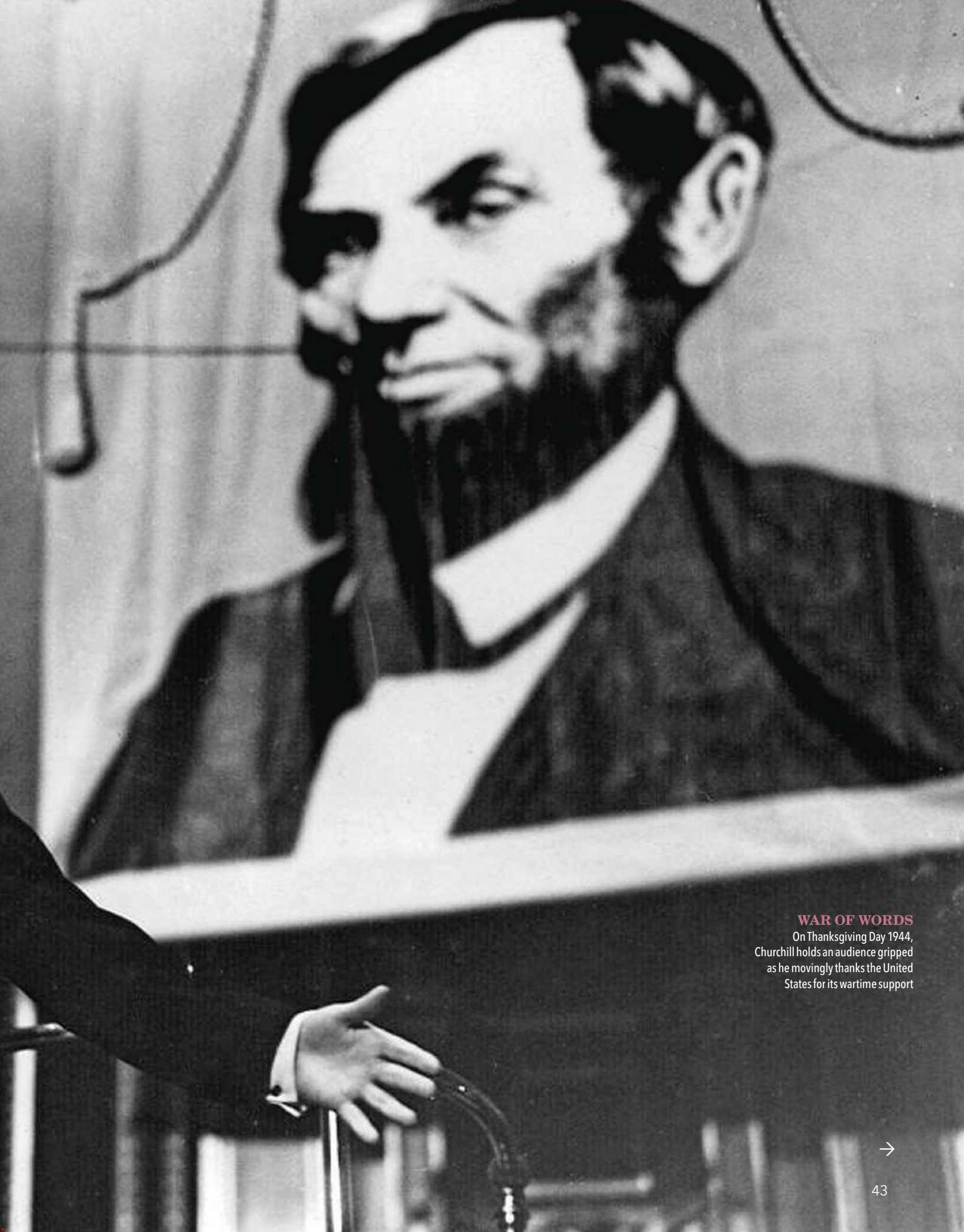
Carefully crafted and charismatically delivered, Churchill's speeches were renowned for their power to electrify an audience. Here we look at six of his most noteworthy addresses

BY MATT ELTON



GETTY IMAGES





#### WAR OF WORDS

On Thanksgiving Day 1944, Churchill holds an audience gripped as he movingly thanks the United States for its wartime support



## Churchill the tongue-tied

22 April 1904

We start with a speech that was actually far from Churchill's finest hour. Indeed, the quote here is not from him at all, but from the record of proceedings in the House of Commons on 22 April 1904. In this atypical oratory failure, the then member of parliament for Oldham forgot what he wanted to say during a debate on trade unions before returning to his seat, head in hands. This humiliating moment was to prove a turning point in his speech-making career.

Churchill had already developed a keen interest in the art of speech-making, having written an unpublished essay in 1897 arguing that "he who

enjoys [the gift of oratory] wields a power more durable than that of a great king". And, following this ignoble experience in parliament, he developed a system of drafting and



Churchill crafted his speeches carefully after a blunder as a young MP

aloud, ensuring the rhythm, phrasing and pauses were all just as he wanted. This may have been partly motivated by a speech impediment: although opinion varies on whether it was a stutter or a lisp, it's possible that he structured his speeches to avoid the sounds and phrases that

**"The hon. member here faltered in the conclusion of his speech, and, amid sympathetic cheers, resumed his seat."**

redrafting all of his public pronouncements, composing them not with a team of speechwriters but with notes from friends, officials and professional wordsmiths. And because the delivery was just as important as the content, he repeatedly practiced saying them

caused him most difficulty.

Later in his life Churchill commented that "my impediment is no hindrance" and, with or without it, the results were to become some of the most stirring and memorable speeches of the 20th century.

## Churchill the historian

5 October 1938

By 1938, the clouds of war were looming. Prime minister Neville Chamberlain was making moves to avoid war by acquiescing to some of Nazi Germany's territorial demands. On 5 October, just days after the PM returned from Munich with details of the agreement, Churchill made an impassioned speech in the House of Commons, suggesting that war was far from being averted.

As well as featuring the evocative turns of phrase that became his hallmark, it also reflected Churchill's lifelong passion for history. Observ-

ing that "In my holiday, I thought it was a chance to study the reign of King Aethelred the



Churchill urged colleagues to take lessons from Aethelred's failure

**"All these calamities fell upon us because of evil counsel, because tribute was not offered to them at the right time nor yet were they resisted; but when they had done the most evil, then was peace made with them."**

Unready", he went on to quote the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* excerpt above. He noted that the 1000-year-old manuscript documenting Aethelred's disastrous reign had lessons for those who would make peace with Hitler. "The House will

remember that that was a period of great misfortune," in which England "fell very swiftly into chaos," he remarked, before going on to conclude that "That is the wisdom of the past, for all wisdom is not new wisdom".

It was not universally well-received

- the transcript records Conservative MP Nancy Astor interrupting periodically, shouting "nonsense!" and "rude!" - but by referring to lessons from history, Churchill did predict the dark period into which Europe was soon to be catapulted.

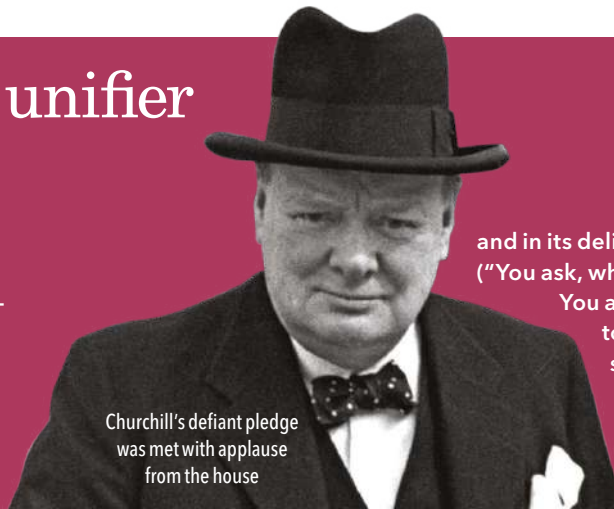


# Churchill the unifier

13 May 1940

The failure of the Allies to prevent the occupation of Norway from April 1940 meant that Neville Chamberlain's leadership was becoming increasingly untenable. On 10 May 1940 he resigned, and Churchill succeeded him the same day.

The new prime minister faced an increasingly dire international situation and a parliament that was far from united behind him. Indeed, he remained extremely unpopular among many in his own party. As such, his inaugural address to the House of Commons on 13 May had to convey the seriousness of what awaited the nation, bring together a divided political class,



Churchill's defiant pledge was met with applause from the house

and in its delivery, using repetition ("You ask, what is our policy?...")

You ask, what is our aim?") to drive home its sense of momentum and purpose against "a monstrous tyranny, never

surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime". Its conclusion was met with

**"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."**

and remain hopeful about what the future held.

The result was a monologue that did just that, both in its content - creating a national government made up of all political parties -

applause. Although there was work still to be done to bring everyone fully on side, the speech revealed Churchill's ability to satisfy several aims and audiences simultaneously.

# Churchill the salesman

4 June 1940

Reflecting the urgency of events in Europe, the weeks of May and June 1940 saw Churchill give some of his most acclaimed, and most famous, speeches. And, just as they often had to cater for a diverse audience, they also had to manage a heady mix of different emotions. This address, given to the House of Commons on 4 June 1940, immediately followed the evacuation of Allied troops from the beaches of Dunkirk. Yet it also came as fears grew that France might surrender to the Germans, and that Britain itself could even be invaded.

As such, Churchill had to boost morale by selling the evacuation as a success, while also stressing the need for caution about what lay ahead. It's another soliloquy full of striking

**"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."**

imagery, comparing the RAF to the knights of the Round Table, "these young men, going forth every morn to guard their native land and all that we stand for". Yet the speech's final section was its most powerful. "I have, myself, full confidence that if all do



their duty..." it began, before launching into what was at once a call to arms and an offer of reassurance that, despite the odds, Britain would stand firm.



## Churchill the idealist

18 June 1940

Churchill's expertise as a historian meant he was particularly well-tuned to parallels with the past, but his awareness of the magnitude of current events also gave him a sense of how he would be remembered by future generations. His 18 June 1940 speech at Westminster invoked the approval of this imagined audience in its final stretch, having previously drawn upon such lofty ideals as freedom, sovereignty and "the survival of Christian civilisation" itself.

Yet it wasn't just aimed at his political peers or the judgement of a hypothetical future: as with some of his other wartime speeches, the prime

minister repeated what he had said in parliament to the whole nation over the radio airwaves later the same evening. This means that the sections in which he spoke glowingly of the RAF - "these splendid men, this brilliant youth, who will have the glory of saving their native land, their island home, and all they love, from the most deadly of all attacks" - can be seen as being aimed, in part, directly at RAF crew members themselves.

This was idealistic rhetoric aimed at inspiring British troops and civilians for a very practical purpose: the Battle of Britain, the crucial air battle due to break out in less than a month's time.

Royal Air Force crew, 1940. Between July and October, the RAF would repel the Luftwaffe's large-scale attack over southern England

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## Churchill the diplomat

26 December 1941

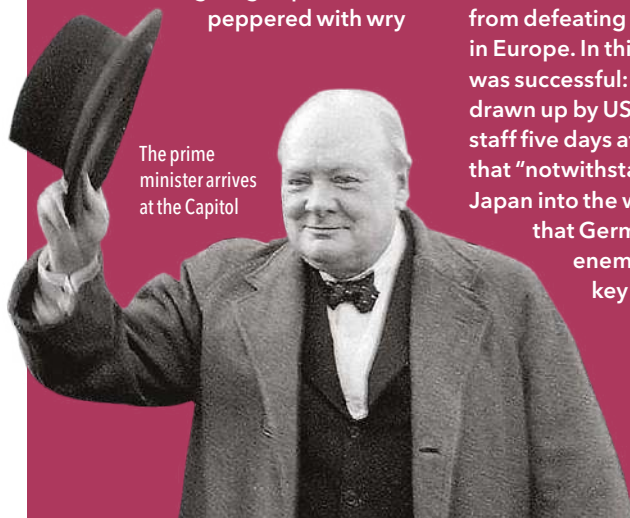
Unlike the other examples here, this address at the end of 1941 was made not in front of the British government but the United States congress. It was not only Churchill's first appearance before the US government, but also the first time that it had been addressed by any British leader.

Footage shows the prime minister giving a speech peppered with wry

humour, as well as repeated reference to a shared mindset and culture - and even to Churchill's own dual American-British heritage.

This appeal to a common cause was key: the US had suffered Japan's unprovoked military strike on Pearl Harbor just three weeks earlier, and Churchill knew it was vital to ensure the attack didn't divert attention from defeating Germany and its allies in Europe. In this, his intervention was successful: a memorandum drawn up by US and British chiefs of staff five days after the speech noted that "notwithstanding the entry of Japan into the war, our view remains that Germany is still the prime enemy and her defeat is the key to victory". ●

Churchill delivers his galvanising 30-minute address to the US congress



The prime minister arrives at the Capitol



“

Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour’.

”



Churchill watches a bomber taking off in 1941. His landmark speech the year before celebrated the bravery of Britain's air force



“

In the days to come the British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together side by side in majesty, in justice and in peace.

”



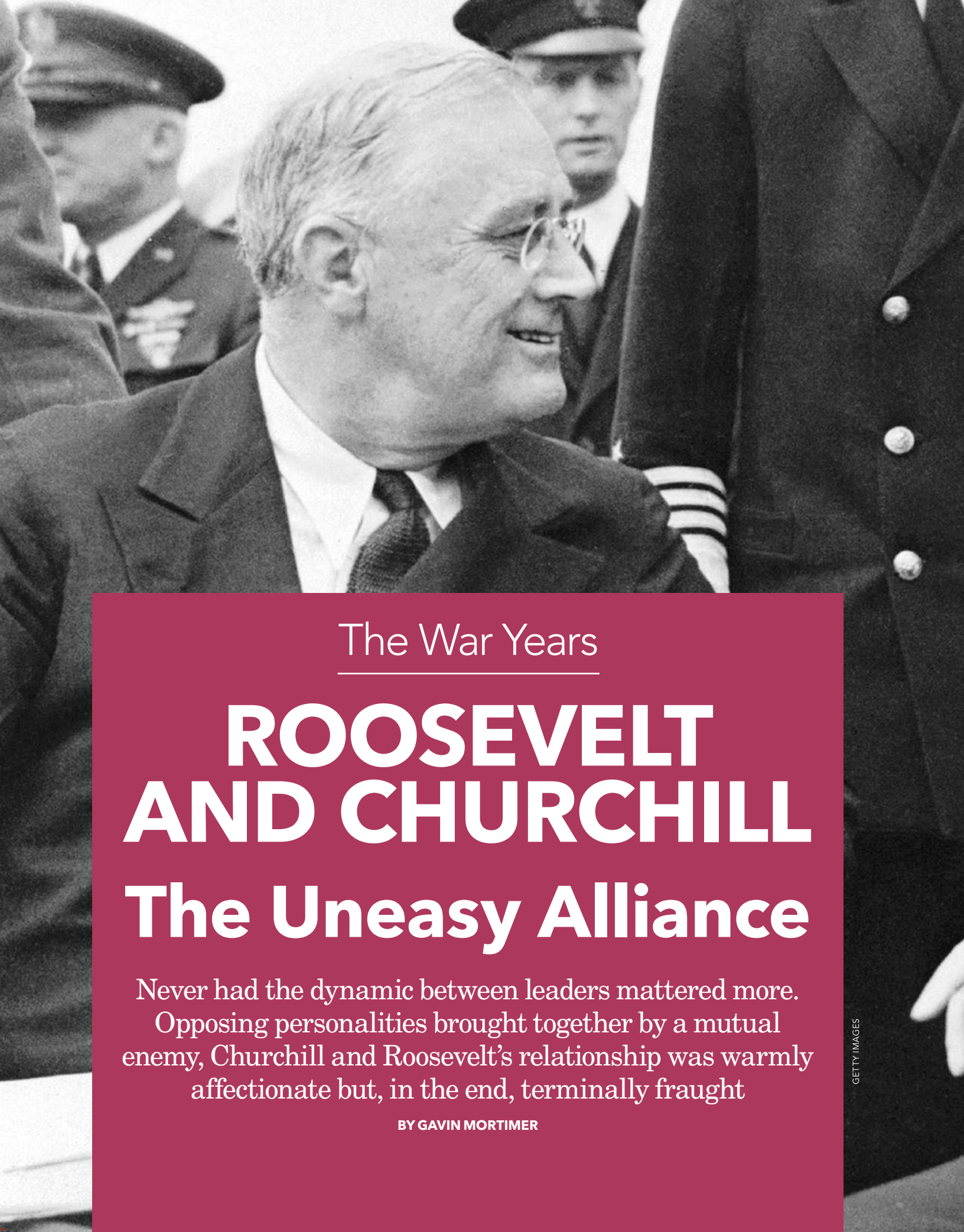
Churchill would use any spare moment to hone his speeches

## CHURCHILL'S DAILY SCHEDULE

The demands of war, and Winston Churchill's exuberant personal life, meant that his schedule was seldom empty. So how did he find time for the process of writing and rewriting that his intricate, charismatic speeches required?

The answer, it seems, lies in his steely work ethic and his ability to move deftly from one task to another. Recently released documents suggest that he would take breakfast in bed before remaining there to carry out work - sometimes until early afternoon. A secretary and typewriter would be on hand, both for dealing with the day's paperwork and recording important thoughts. It was here that Churchill likely both dictated the first drafts of some of his speeches and, later, revised the typed copy himself.

After rising from his bed, he would bathe and eat lunch before attending cabinet meetings and public engagements. He would then return for a nap of up to two hours, before sometimes enjoying yet another bath. A reinvigorating dinner (and drinks) would lead into a series of committee meetings, which Churchill would often chair late into the night.



The War Years

# ROOSEVELT AND CHURCHILL

## The Uneasy Alliance

Never had the dynamic between leaders mattered more.

Opposing personalities brought together by a mutual enemy, Churchill and Roosevelt's relationship was warmly affectionate but, in the end, terminally fraught

BY GAVIN MORTIMER





# ODD COUPLE

Politically worlds apart, Churchill and Roosevelt (pictured here in August 1941) nonetheless forged a strong alliance and friendship. But eventually the cracks began to show

**I**n January 1941, Harry Hopkins arrived in Britain on a fact-finding mission that would last for a month. Hopkins was President Franklin Roosevelt's special advisor, a plain-talking American who in time would affectionately be dubbed by Winston Churchill 'Lord Root-of-the-Matter'.

The prime minister took Hopkins to the far north of Scotland, to the naval base at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands that sheltered Britain's Home Fleet. He wanted to show off to his American visitor, impress upon Hopkins the strength and modernity of the Royal Navy. But it was also an opportunity to form a bond with a man who had enjoyed the confidence of Roosevelt since the late 1920s. En route back to London, the party dined royally at the Station Hotel in Glasgow. At the end of the meal, Hopkins rose and, turning to the prime minister, said: "I suppose you wish to know what I am going to say to President Roosevelt on my return." There was a faint nod of Churchill's head. Hopkins said he would quote a passage from the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament. "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy

## **"Half-American he may have been, but Churchill was very much an English aristocrat in manner and mentality"**

people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Then he ad-libbed: "Even to the end." Hopkins retook his seat and the prime minister wiped a tear from his eye.

### **UNEQUAL PARTNERS**

Churchill's affinity for the United States had its roots in more than just the fact his mother, Jennie Jerome, hailed from Brooklyn. Half-American he may have been, but Churchill was very much an English aristocrat in manner and mentality. Yet on his first visit to the

US, just before he turned 21 in 1895, he was enraptured by the energy and excitement of New York, telling his brother in a letter he had arrived in "a very great country".

He returned at the tail end of the century for a lecture tour about his experiences as a reporter in the ongoing Boer War. Now the member of parliament for Oldham, in the north of England, Churchill was hosted in New York by the state's governor, Theodore Roosevelt, soon to become president after the assassination of William McKinley.

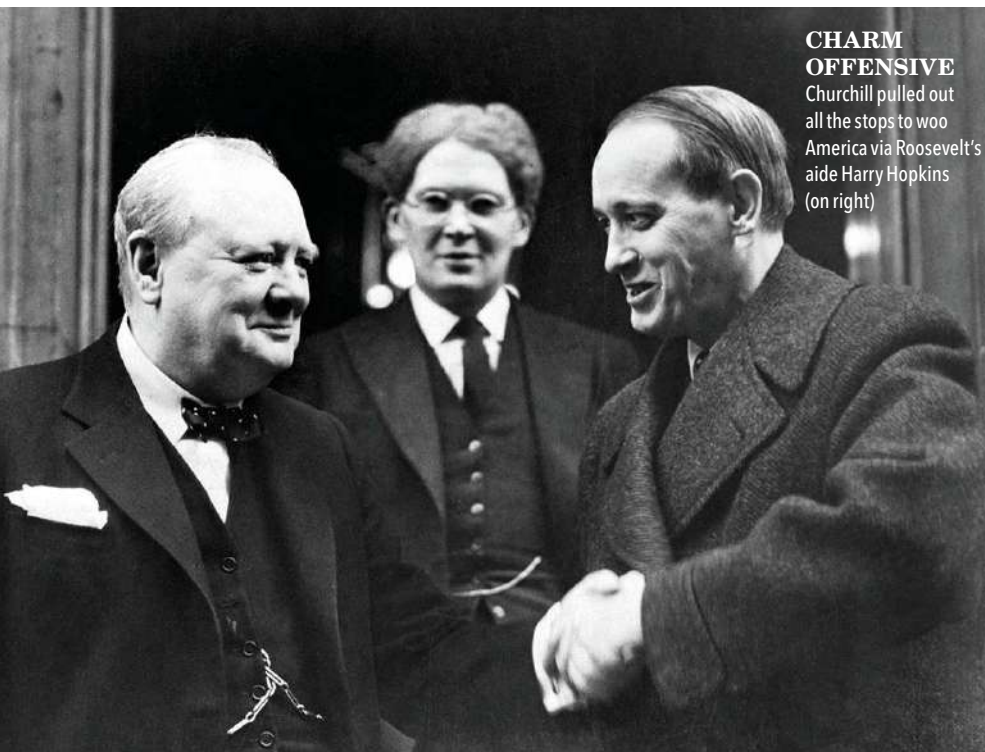
Theodore never warmed to Churchill because, according to the former's daughter, "they were so alike" – both men were adventurous, opinionated and obstinate. On the other hand, Franklin, Theodore's fifth cousin, had a less combative character, and the onset of polio in 1921, when he was 39, imbued in him an empathy and compassion for ordinary people that the aristocratic Churchill often lacked.

The first time the pair met was at a banquet in London in 1918, when Roosevelt was a navy assistant secretary and Churchill a famous statesman who had little to say to an American in such a seemingly lowly position.

Their second meeting, in contrast, was in August 1941 – during Roosevelt's third term as president – almost a year after he had agreed to transfer 50 US Navy destroyers to the Royal Navy in exchange for landing rights at naval and air bases in eight British colonies. Churchill had described the transaction as evidence of the "spirit of confidence, sympathy and goodwill" that existed between the two countries, a description at odds with those Americans who were angered by their president's support for a nation waging a war they didn't believe concerned them. Roosevelt was therefore furtive in travelling to Placentia Bay in Newfoundland for a rendezvous with Churchill.

Churchill's objective at that meeting was to persuade the Americans to supply more material assistance in the war, declaring "Give us the tools and we will finish the job". Roosevelt, however, was wary of antagonising the isolationists back home. As such, he committed to little.

Churchill was unaccustomed to not getting his own way. Throughout his life, the force of his overpowering personality



### **CHARM OFFENSIVE**

Churchill pulled out all the stops to woo America via Roosevelt's aide Harry Hopkins (on right)

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## UNITED FRONT

The pair appear before the press at Casablanca in 1943, where Churchill emphasised their bond as “friends and partners”

had made him the dominant partner in every relationship; but with Roosevelt he came up against a man who, though confined to a wheelchair, wielded the power. According to the British leader's long-time physician, Lord Charles Moran, it effected a positive change. “For the first time I have seen Winston content to listen,” wrote Moran in his diary in December 1941, three weeks after the US had entered the war. “You could almost feel the importance he attaches to bringing the president along with him, and in that good cause he has become a very model of restraint and self-discipline; it is surely a new Winston who is sitting there silent.”

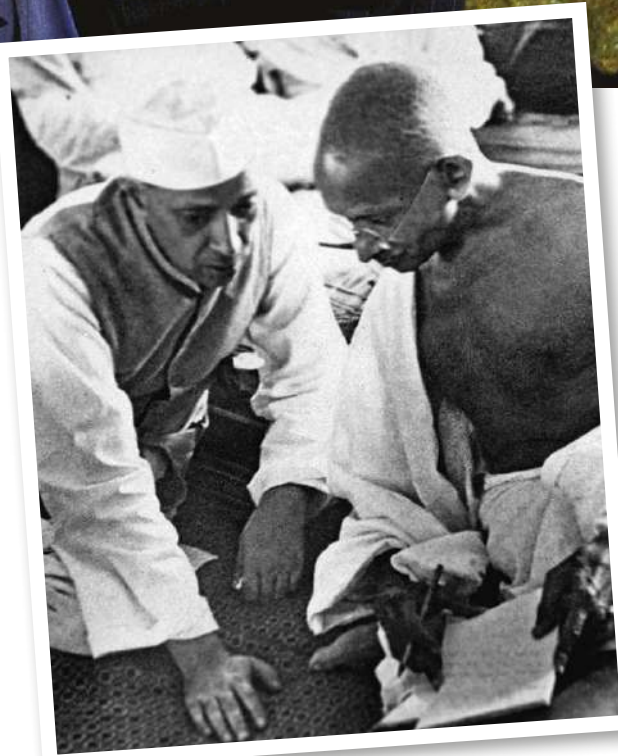
Churchill spent Christmas 1941 in Washington, where he addressed congress and secured Roosevelt's agreement that, despite Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, for the US “Germany is still the prime enemy and her defeat is the key to victory”.

## FUN AND FRICTION

Roosevelt, a great observer of people, found much to admire in Churchill. “It is fun to be in the same decade with you,” he cabled to the prime minister in January 1942. But amid the fun there was friction between the pair, with an initial disagree-

ment centred on British colonial rule in India. Roosevelt, in the words of Lord Moran, viewed the country as “a lamentable example of British imperialism” and told Churchill it should be granted independence immediately. The prime minister was violently opposed to such a suggestion. He told Roosevelt he was prepared to consider independence after the war, but not until then; the issue remained one of many sources of conflict that developed between the two.

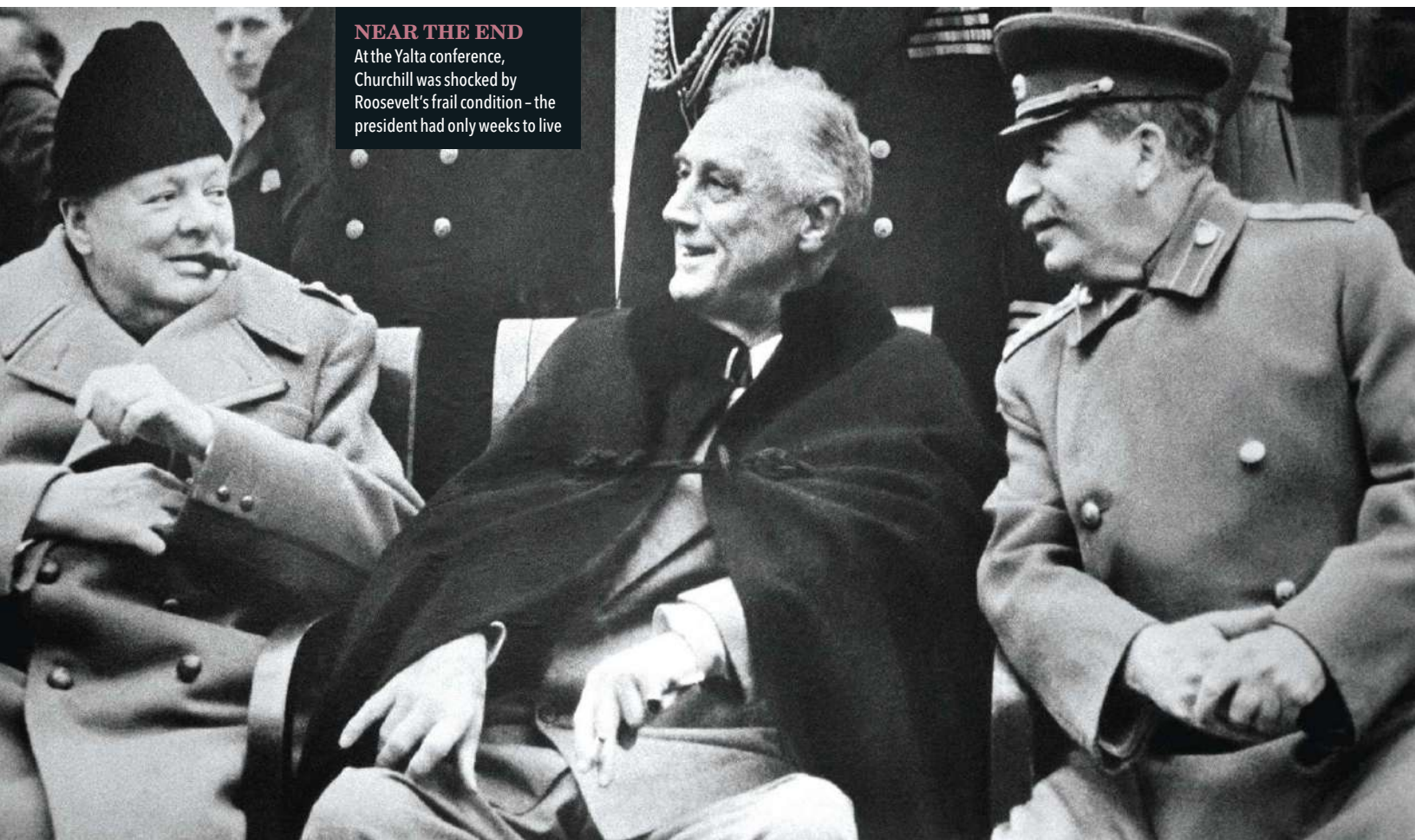
Yet they shared some tender moments, brought together by their unique experience as commanders-in-chief of their countries. When Churchill visited South Carolina in June 1942, Roosevelt fussed over his pale British skin, telling him to stay out of the sun otherwise he'd get heat stroke. Seven months later, at the end of the Casablanca conference, Churchill insisted gently that the president be carried onto the roof of their billet so they could watch the



## INDIA IMPASSE

Indian politicians Nehru and Gandhi. India was one of the areas on which the leaders were diametrically opposed, the pro-independence Roosevelt clashing with arch imperialist Churchill





**NEAR THE END**

At the Yalta conference, Churchill was shocked by Roosevelt's frail condition - the president had only weeks to live

exquisite sunset over the Atlas Mountains together. When Roosevelt had retired for the night, Churchill murmured to his physician: "I love these Americans."

But, in truth, all the pair had in common as politicians was the war. Churchill was a privileged aristocrat who had neither interest nor understanding of the working class; Roosevelt was a democrat, a man of the people who had spent the first 10 years of his presidency implementing his ambitious New Deal, a series of programmes and reforms to relieve the suffering of Americans in the Great Depression.

Initially Roosevelt was somewhat in awe of the prime minister. For two years, the British empire had stood alone against Hitler and the American president attributed that resolve largely to Churchill's leadership. But once the US entered the war, Roosevelt started to reassess.

Churchill's strength was in rallying the people around the flag, stiffening the sinews and exhorting the country to

**"It soon became apparent to Roosevelt that Churchill was not an astute military strategist"**

"never surrender". It soon became apparent to Roosevelt that he was not an astute military strategist, but rather a man who grew more resentful as the war progressed and he saw the decline of his own status and that of his country in the alliance with America and the Soviets.

Churchill understood that it was the other allies who would be the real winners of the war, the two superpowers in the

second half of the century, with the strong likelihood that Britain's empire would slowly disintegrate. This was difficult for Churchill to accept, particularly given that they had stood alone for so long in the early days of the war.

**RELATIONS COOL**

The principal bone of contention over which Roosevelt and Churchill bared their teeth was the invasion of France. The prime minister had successfully argued against launching an invasion in 1942, but throughout 1943 the Americans grew more frustrated with British procrastination. "Some of us are beginning to wonder whether the invasion will ever come off," complained Harry Hopkins in November that year. Churchill, for his part, was "explosive and obstreperous" with the Americans when he learned that the extra landing craft he had demanded for Operation Overlord (the codename for the invasion of France) had instead been dispatched to the far east.

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By February 1944, Churchill was complaining to his generals about Roosevelt's "unpleasant attitude lately", and the president's rejection of the prime minister's invitation to spend Easter together in Bermuda provided further evidence of a cooling in the relationship. Roosevelt said he had flu, but he also wanted to avoid another tiresome monologue from Churchill on why the invasion of France should be postponed until later that summer.

The invasion was launched on 6 June, but the two leaders were soon bickering once more, this time about the invasion of southern France. Churchill regarded such a venture as "sheer folly" and believed the forces should be landed in the Balkans. He feared that the Soviet Union intended to invade Greece, but Roosevelt refused to go along with the idea, which prompted the prime minister to send a furious cable to Roosevelt in December 1944. Relations between the two leaders, a White House official later recalled, "were more strained than ever before".

The two leaders met for the final time at the Yalta conference in Crimea in February 1945. Hosted by Stalin, the conference discussed the establishment of a United Nations organisation and the fate

of Poland. Churchill was shocked by the poor health of the president, and it was left to him to do most of the negotiating with the pugnacious Soviet leader.

Roosevelt died two months later, on 12 April 1945 and, to the surprise of many, Churchill decided against attending the funeral. It was a curious decision that he never adequately explained.

He had visited North America on several occasions since that first meeting with Roosevelt back in August 1941, and the pair had sent each other more than 1,700 messages. In one instance early on in the war, Churchill had even confessed to his private secretary that: "No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt."

But his love had cooled, and Churchill seemingly no longer had the desire to make the long journey across the Atlantic in order to honour the memory of a man with whom he had shared so many moments of both great joy and intense bitterness. His absence from the funeral was noted by the Americans, but it hardly mattered. Just three months later, Churchill was voted out of office by the British people, as seemingly ungracious an act as his own decision not to attend Roosevelt's funeral. ●



#### LATE TRIBUTE

Churchill didn't attend the funeral of his former ally, only visiting his grave a year later

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY



## PEARL HARBOR

The "dastardly attack" that shocked the US into the war

President Roosevelt called 7 December 1941 a "date which will live in infamy", but for Churchill the Japanese attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii (above) was the moment he knew the Allies could win the war.

Not that there was any celebrating from the prime minister when he learned the news of the attack on the US Pacific Fleet. The sheer scale of the destruction was shocking: the attack saw the deaths of 2,403 Americans and the sinking of four battleships, three destroyers and four smaller vessels, as well as the loss of 188 aircraft. Yet the 360 Japanese aircraft had not destroyed any of the fleet's aircraft carriers and nor had they wiped out Pearl Harbor's oil tanks.

What they had done, however, was unite American public opinion behind their president. Gone were the vast majority of those voices demanding America stay out of a European war; the surprise attack - "unprovoked and dastardly" as Roosevelt described it in a speech to Congress on 8 December - enraged all Americans. Within an hour of the president's speech, congress passed a formal declaration of war against Japan. On 11 December, Hitler declared war on the US, and a few hours later, the senate voted 88-0 in favour of going to war with Germany. The next day, Churchill left for America on board the *Duke of York* battleship, "panting to meet the president", in the words of his personal physician who accompanied him across the Atlantic.







The War Years

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# THE FLAWED WARLORD

An inspirational leader and orator he may have been, but Churchill's quality as a military strategist is open to debate. Here are six key moments that tested his mettle in the heat of war

BY GAVIN MORTIMER

## VISION OF VICTORY

Churchill views the north African front at El Alamein, August 1942. Hailed as a bold and visionary military strategist, his record as Britain's commander-in-chief tells a more mixed story





**“He was pleased when 10 Downing Street was among the thousands of homes damaged”**

**CHIN UP**  
Inspecting air raid damage in 1940. Churchill understood the importance of keeping the public's spirits up

## THE BLITZ

Boosting morale in bombed-out Britain

The Luftwaffe bombing of London, better known as the Blitz, reduced Churchill to tears. On the morning of 11 May 1941 he stood inside parliament's wrecked House of Commons, weeping as he surveyed the damage to the scene of some of his greatest oratory triumphs.

Ironically, 12 months earlier he had risen in the House to tell the nation in his maiden speech as prime minister that he had nothing to offer but “blood, toil, tears and sweat”. The tears and sweat on 11 May 1941 also came from the rescue services who were frantically digging out survivors of the previous night's raid (the deadliest since the Blitz began), while the blood belonged to the dead – nearly 1,500 of them in just a matter of hours.

Although several British cities were targeted by Luftwaffe planes – including Birmingham, Glasgow, Bristol, Sheffield, Belfast and Swansea – it was London that bore the brunt. In 71 major raids between September 1940 and May 1941 nearly 20,000 Londoners were killed and 72,500 wounded. Among the hundreds of thousands of homes damaged or destroyed was the prime minister's residence, 10 Downing Street, a fact that pleased Churchill. He was now able to look his fellow Londoners in the eye as he went on one of his many walkabouts among the worst-hit areas. Like them, he too was now a victim of Nazi aggression.

Conscious of the need to maintain the people's morale during the Blitz, the war cabinet exerted a tight grip

on the press through censorship. In one case, Churchill intervened personally to prevent the prosecution of six firefighters for looting from a damaged shop because he feared it might undermine morale. The importance of a united home front was underlined to the prime minister from an encounter with an air raid warden during the early days of the Blitz. “It's a grand life,” declared the warden during another attack, “if we don't weaken.”

Britain wearied but didn't weaken during the brutal months of the Blitz, and it was with pride in May 1945 that Churchill said in a speech: “The lights went out and the bombs came down. But every man, woman and child in the country had no thought of quitting the struggle.”



### SECRET ARMY

Inspecting one of the new covert units, originally trained to repel a Nazi invasion

### ON A MISSION

An SAS unit in north Africa, 1943, where they destroyed enemy aircraft and supply lines



### WHO DARES WINS

David Stirling, whose elite SAS force ran hit and run raids behind enemy lines



## COMMANDOS

Showing his taste for audacious tactics

Churchill was a man of action and very much a child of the Victorian era, when wars had been won by individual dash, daring and pluck. But in an age of tanks, aircraft, gas and heavy weaponry, these qualities were becoming increasingly obsolete.

In June 1940, Churchill believed that a force of specially trained men, hand-picked for their initiative, endurance and aggression, could prove invaluable in the then unequal fight against Nazi Germany. In a memo on 18 June to General Ismay, secretary of the imperial defence chiefs of staff committee, Churchill proposed the establishment of "at least 20,000 Storm Troops or 'Leopards', drawn from existing units, ready to spring at the throat of any small landings or descents".

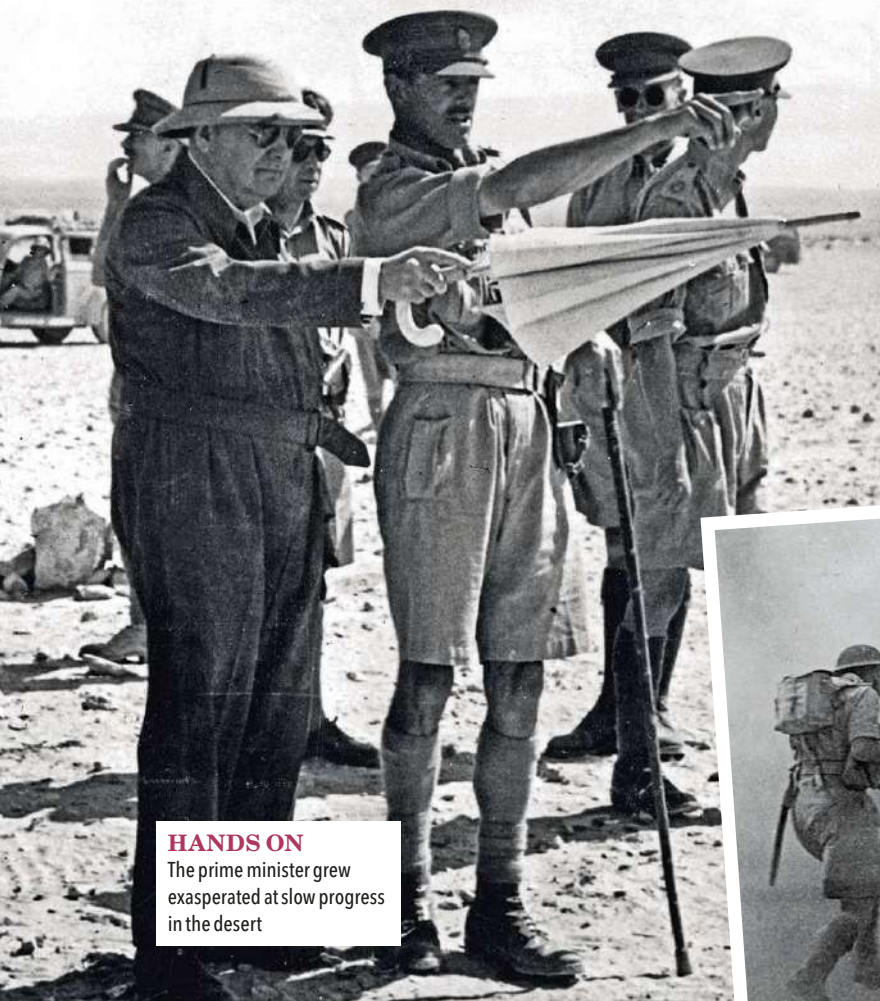
Initially, Churchill envisaged these storm troops - soon christened 'commandos' - in a defence role in the event of a German invasion, but when it became clear Hitler had decided against such a move, Churchill demanded that the commandos be used offensively. Some of the new units were sent to the Middle East in early 1941, and among their number was a young Scottish officer called David Stirling.

Audacious and innovative, Stirling had the idea of raising a small parachute unit to attack remote enemy airfields in Libya. In July 1941 he was given permission to recruit 66 men from the commandos. The unit, called the Special Air Service (SAS), soon began to wreak havoc behind enemy lines with its hit and run raids.

One of the volunteers was Randolph Churchill, the prime minister's son, who wrote letters home to his father describing their exploits. When the prime minister visited Cairo in August 1942 he requested a meeting with Stirling, a man he subsequently referred to as "the Scarlet Pimpernel".

Churchill was similarly smitten with the eccentric Orde Wingate, who found fame as a jungle fighter in Burma leading a guerrilla unit known as the Chindits. Like Stirling, he appealed to the prime minister's quixotic nature. But the artful politician in Churchill also recognised the propaganda value of dashing units like the SAS and the Chindits in helping boost the nation's morale with colourful stories in the newspapers of their derring-do.

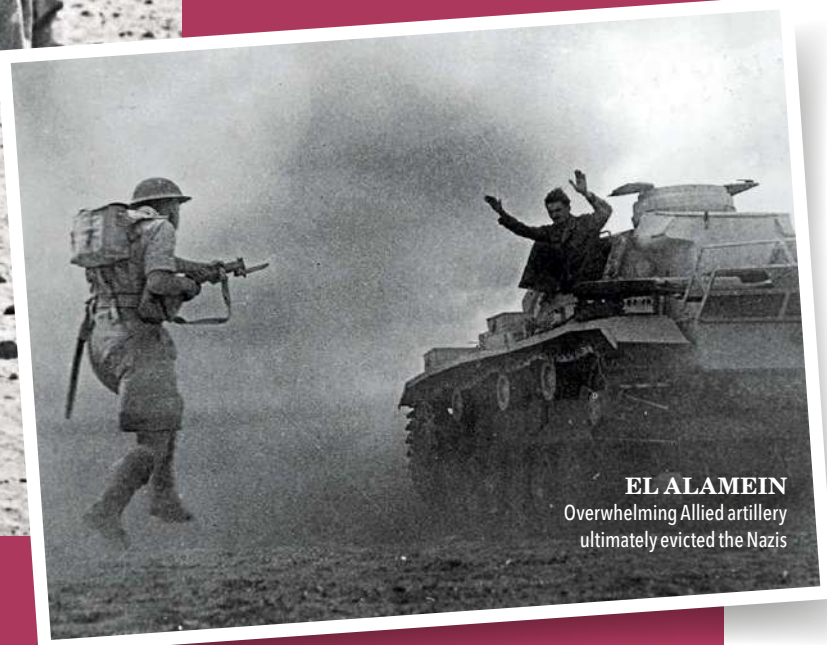




#### HANDS ON

The prime minister grew exasperated at slow progress in the desert

**“In desperate need of a victory, Churchill **badgered** his generals **constantly**”**



#### EL ALAMEIN

Overwhelming Allied artillery ultimately evicted the Nazis

## NORTH AFRICA

Meddling and losing grip in the desert

Nowhere did Churchill interfere more in his generals' running of the war than in north Africa. No doubt there was a feeling of helplessness on the part of the prime minister at a conflict fought thousands of kilometres away, against an enemy as cunning as General Rommel, nicknamed the 'Desert Fox'. But although Churchill recognised the strategic importance of winning the north Africa war more clearly than Adolf Hitler, he showed little understanding of the constraints imposed on his generals by terrain and logistics.

Churchill's first blunder came in early 1941, in the immediate aftermath of the Allies' comprehensive defeat of fascist Italian forces in Libya. Believing the campaign won, Churchill overruled commander-in-

chief General Archibald Wavell - who wanted to drive the enemy right out of north Africa - and ordered the bulk of his troops and air force to Greece. But in the same month Rommel arrived in Libya and the British were soon falling back against his well-disciplined Afrika Korps.

On 26 March 1941, Churchill cabled Wavell to express his "concern" at the British retreat, snidely commenting: "I presume you are only waiting for the tortoise to stick his head out far enough before chopping it off." Wavell was hindered by Churchill's premature transfer of his forces the previous month, but the prime minister - impatient for success - ignored any suggestion that he might be to blame. Wavell's successor, General Claude Auchinleck, was

subjected to similar pressure from Churchill. The prime minister demanded action in May 1942, but Auchinleck refused to be bullied into launching an offensive before he was ready, a procrastination that ultimately led to his removal as commander-in-chief in August 1942.

General Harold Alexander was appointed in his stead, joined in north Africa by General Bernard Montgomery. This pair resolutely refused to be cowed by Churchill who, in desperate need of a victory to impress the Americans and Soviets, badgered them constantly. Eventually the offensive was launched at a time and place of the generals' choosing - El Alamein on 23 October 1942 - and it finally gave Churchill the victory he had demanded.





#### HUMILIATION

Churchill feared the loss of the British colonies looked weak to his new US allies



#### SINGAPORE LOST

The British colony fell to the Japanese on 15 February 1942

## MALAYA & SINGAPORE

Miscalculating risks brings disaster in the far east

"The worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history" – this is how Churchill described the fall of the British colony of Singapore on 15 February 1942, just one week after Japan's attack.

Events in Singapore even led Churchill to draw unfavourable comparisons between the fighting quality of the Second World War soldier and the British 'Tommy' of the First World War. "In 1915 our men fought on even when they had only one shell left and were under fierce barrage," he grimly noted. "Now they cannot resist dive bombers. We had so many men in Singapore, so many men – they should have done better."

The loss of Singapore was just one of many catastrophes to befall the British in the far east, with the colonies

of Hong Kong, Malaya and Burma also seized. But Singapore hurt the most because it had not only been a key naval base, but also a symbol of British prestige in the region. Its loss and the surrender of around 90,000 men appalled Churchill at a time when he needed to show America – which had entered the war two months earlier – that Britain was an indomitable ally.

Yet Churchill's anger was probably also aimed at himself. In May 1941 he had been warned against sending the bulk of the RAF fighter force to combat Rommel in north Africa at the expense of the far east: "The defences of Singapore are still considerably below standard," said Sir John Dill, chief of the imperial general staff. "Risks must of course be taken in war, but they must be calculated risks."

Churchill ignored the warning because he considered reinforcing Singapore too defensive. Instead he preferred to go on the offensive and win back the ground won by Rommel in north Africa. It was characteristically bold of Churchill but, as Dill said, a risk in war should always be "calculated", and leaving Singapore and Malaya vulnerable to air attack was a dangerous gamble.

Churchill even dismissed the concerns of President Roosevelt, who in July 1941 cautioned against the prime minister "trying to do too much" in Egypt. But Churchill wouldn't be diverted from his aims, admitting subsequently that he "was resigned to pay whatever forfeits were exacted". Those forfeits would be numerous.



### RIGHT TIME

Troops arrive at Omaha Beach. Fear over mistiming D-Day exhausted Churchill and brought him into conflict with Roosevelt



**“Churchill was haunted by the disaster at Gallipoli”**

## NORMANDY INVASION

### Under pressure over Operation Overlord

A key turning point of the war was the massive Allied invasion of German-occupied France, known as D-Day. But timing was crucial. According to Churchill's doctor, the question of when to launch the invasion was “a canker” on the prime minister's mind. It was also a continual source of friction between Churchill and the Americans. Within months of declaring war on Germany, the Americans were talking about invading France, convinced that this was the only way the war would be won. Churchill believed the only way the war could be *lost* was with a premature invasion. He was also haunted by his experience in the First World War, when his idea to shorten the war by invading Turkey resulted in the disaster at Gallipoli.

Churchill impressed upon the Americans the need for patience,

reminding his allies that the German army was well-trained and battle-hardened, far more experienced than the Americans, however well-equipped and enthusiastic they might be.

By May 1943 it was agreed that the invasion of France would be launched in May 1944 (later put back to 6 June), but still Churchill harboured doubts. On 19 July 1943 he wrote to his chiefs of staff, expressing his belief that the planned 27 Anglo-American divisions would not be enough for the invasion when faced with the “extraordinary fighting efficiency of the German army”. He suggested postponing the invasion until August 1944, and in the meantime advocated a plan for landing in the north of Norway. Churchill's concerns were shared by King George VI, and passed on to President Roosevelt. “Unless there is a

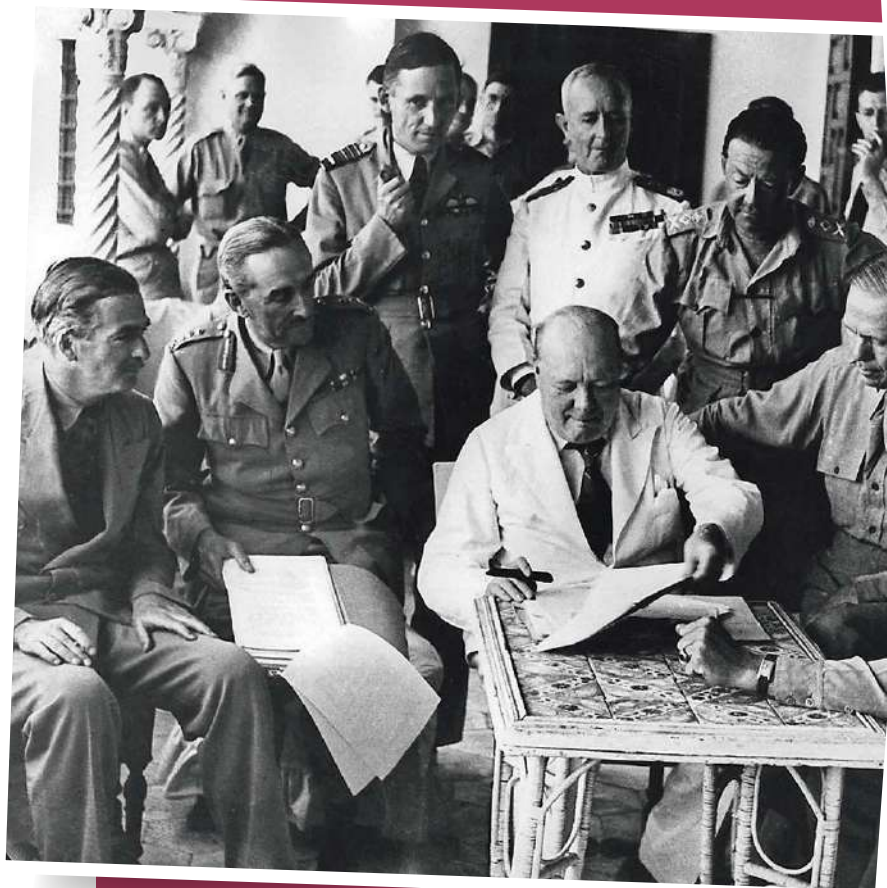
German collapse, the campaign of 1944 will be by far the most dangerous we have undertaken,” said Churchill.

Roosevelt remained resolute, while the Soviet Union applied even more pressure for an invasion. At the Tehran conference in late November 1943, Stalin challenged Churchill over the issue, implying that he did not want to invade France. Not so, retorted Churchill, adding that it was “our stern duty to hurl across the Channel against the Germans every sinew of our strength”.

Nonetheless, the anxiety surrounding the invasion of France exhausted the prime minister and caused a deterioration in his relationship with Roosevelt that was never repaired.

→ **Read more about Operation Overlord on page 62**





#### BEST LAID PLANS

Churchill believed attacking Italy would draw German troops away from the Allies' northern advance



#### SICILY SEIZED

While Sicily fell rapidly, a drawn-out and costly battle followed on the mainland



#### BOGGED DOWN

British and South African troops hold up a Nazi trophy flag in Cassino. Fighting in Italy dragged on after Rome's liberation

## ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

Trapped in arguments over Europe's 'soft underbelly'

Inextricably linked to the Allies' divergent views on when to invade France was their disagreement over the Italian campaign. In May 1943, with the war in north Africa won, Churchill travelled to the US to try to persuade Roosevelt to prioritise the invasion of Italy - what Churchill called the 'soft underbelly of Europe' - over that of France.

The idea was coolly received by the president. "This fighting in Italy does not make sense to him," explained Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's emissary to Britain. "He wants the 20 divisions, which will be set free when Sicily has been won, to be used in building up the force that is to invade France."

Even getting Roosevelt to agree to the invasion of Sicily had been a struggle. The president had only

relented when Churchill claimed that the island's capture would allow Allied shipping from India and the Middle East to go through the Mediterranean instead of around South Africa.

In fact, Sicily fell in a little over a month, precipitating the downfall of Mussolini and the surrender of Italy. On 3 September the Allies invaded southern Italy, but soon became bogged down by the arrival of fierce Nazi resistance. "The stagnation of the whole campaign on the Italian front is becoming scandalous," wrote the prime minister to his chiefs of staff on 19 December 1943. The situation didn't improve in 1944 as the Allies' strategy became to tie down as many German divisions in Italy as possible prior to the invasion of France.

A spring offensive was launched in May, but progress was slow because of heavy German resistance south of Rome. After nine months of occupation, the Italian capital was finally liberated on 4 June - two days before the invasion of France began. Churchill wished to push north, but Roosevelt was adamant that the focus must now be on invading southern France. Roosevelt wouldn't budge, dismal proof to Churchill that he was now the junior partner.

He registered his "solemn protest" with the president, but also conceded that his hopes of a swift conclusion to the Italian campaign were "dashed to the ground". By its end, Allied casualties in Italy would stand at over 300,000, with more than 152,000 Italian civilian deaths. ●



## ON THE ATTACK

Normandy shortly after D-Day  
in June 1944 – the beginning of  
Operation Overlord, the largest  
seaborne invasion in history



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The War Years

# OVERLORD UNLEASHED

By the summer of 1944, beating Hitler at last seemed possible, as Churchill's troops were joined by US muscle for Operation Overlord – the massive naval, air and land assault that would finally bring victory in western Europe

BY NIGE TASSELL



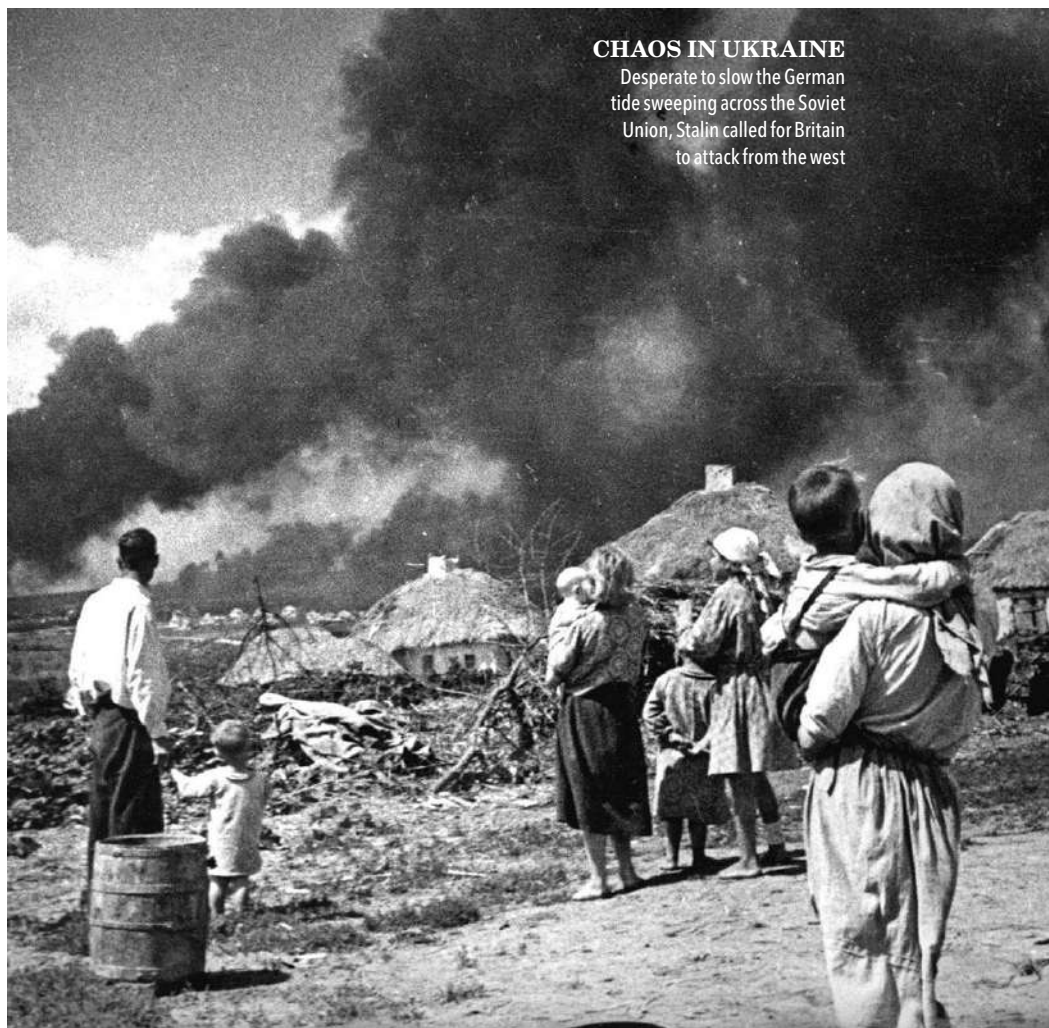
***“You are to prepare for the invasion of Europe, for unless we can go and land and fight Hitler and beat his forces on land, we shall never win this war.”***

Churchill issued this instruction to Captain Lord Louis Mountbatten, his newly appointed chief of combined operations, back in October 1941. After the Dunkirk evacuation the previous year, the prime minister believed that western Europe was the crucible where the war would ultimately be decided. But finding the right conditions to launch such an invasion was another matter, and it would be the best part of three years before that monumental operation, D-Day, was undertaken. Even then, it was a further 11 months until Germany surrendered and Europe was fully liberated.

Josef Stalin also knew that any overall Allied victory depended on defeating Germany in western Europe, which in turn depended on a successful invasion campaign across the English Channel. On 22 June 1941, the German invasion of the Soviet Union drastically altered the direction and thrust of the war. German progress eastwards into Soviet territory was swift and significant, leading to calls from Stalin for Britain to open up a second front in the west that would cause Hitler's troops to be redeployed and thus ease the pressure on Soviet forces. Churchill simply didn't have the capability to do so; Britain's naval capacity could only transport around 6,000 men at a time, woefully short of what would be required. In order to even consider such a campaign, Churchill sought the assistance of the United States. However, the isolationists in the American establishment, who were considerable, still very much had Roosevelt's ear. These strident voices preferred the US to remain neutral, and stay out of the war in Europe.

### USA JOINS THE FRAY

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor changed everything. In December 1941, Roosevelt declared war on Japan, but



### CHAOS IN UKRAINE

Desperate to slow the German tide sweeping across the Soviet Union, Stalin called for Britain to attack from the west

**“When Hitler declared war on the US it was music to Churchill’s ears – at last he had an ally”**

remained reluctant to do the same with Germany. His mind was made up for him, however, when Hitler declared war on the US instead. This was music to Churchill's ears; he finally had a major ally with whom he could attempt to take control of western Europe. The prime

minister immediately paid Roosevelt a visit in Washington DC and the first American troops landed in Britain the following month.

Despite Stalin's protestations, establishing a second front wouldn't be possible in 1942 because of Britain's commitments in north Africa. Once the region was made secure in May 1943, Churchill's military advisors nonetheless recommended keeping those troops in the Mediterranean and trying to take Italy out of the war. Britain simply didn't have the manpower to launch campaigns on both Mussolini and Hitler. But Churchill couldn't admit this to Roosevelt or Stalin, both of whom were committed to the idea of the second front. With the US having abandoned its isolationist worldview, Churchill was desperate to maintain Britain's stature as a world power. An admission of his military limits would turn him

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## READY FOR ACTION

US soldiers prepare to depart Weymouth, to take part in Operation Overlord



into the weakest element of the three-way relationship.

Nonetheless, at an Anglo-American conference in Washington in May 1943, the decision was made to invade France the following year. Churchill had to get on board. At the Tehran conference that November, both he and Roosevelt reassured Stalin that the second front would be opened in six months' time. The campaign was given a name – Operation Overlord. But the Soviet leader wasn't entirely convinced, especially when he heard that an overall commander for the operation hadn't yet been chosen. Roosevelt reacted quickly and a lieutenant general, Dwight Eisenhower, was appointed within days.

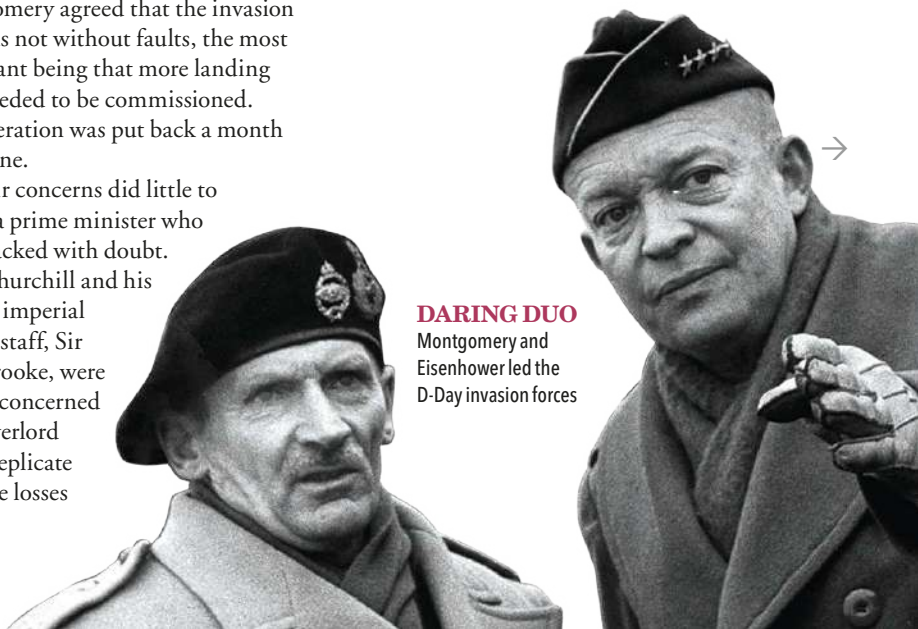
Eisenhower was named commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), while

the architect of British success in north Africa, General Bernard Montgomery, became commander of all British and Canadian land forces. Eisenhower and Montgomery agreed that the invasion plan was not without faults, the most significant being that more landing craft needed to be commissioned. The operation was put back a month until June.

Their concerns did little to soothe a prime minister who was wracked with doubt. Both Churchill and his chief of imperial general staff, Sir Alan Brooke, were gravely concerned that Overlord might replicate the huge losses

## DARING DUO

Montgomery and Eisenhower led the D-Day invasion forces







**NORMANDY BOUND**  
Infantrymen approach Omaha Beach, where Allied casualties would be high

at the battle of the Somme during the First World War, when nearly 20,000 British soldiers were killed in the first day of combat. In early 1944, Churchill told Eisenhower of his misgivings: “When I think of the beaches of Normandy choked with the flower of American and British youth, and when, in my mind’s eye, I see the tides running red with their blood, I have my doubts... I have my doubts.”

In mid-May 1944, Eisenhower and Montgomery made a five-hour presentation in London, detailing the invasion’s finer points to “the greatest assembly of military leadership the world has ever

## “When troops arrived, they found the beaches strewn with obstacles laid by the Germans”

known”. What Churchill heard seemed to reassure him somewhat. “I am hardening toward this enterprise,” he told Eisenhower afterwards.

In the weeks left before D-Day, Churchill grew increasingly energised, putting himself in what the historian Antony Beevor describes as “a nervous state of irrational optimism”. This drive and enthusiasm manifested itself in, as Beevor notes, “a stream of ideas, most of them utterly impractical, poured forth in memos that produced groans and sighs in Whitehall”. One idea involved a “reverse Dunkirk”, where civilian

boats, loaded with soldiers, would follow the navy’s ships to deliver a supplementary wave of infantry troops.

Another idea of Churchill’s was to witness D-Day in the flesh – to see the bombardment for himself, aboard the cruiser HMS *Belfast*. King George VI had to personally intervene on this matter, pointing out that even he – as a younger man, an experienced sailor and the head of the armed services – had agreed to stay on British soil.

### D-DAY AT LAST

Come early June, bad weather forced Eisenhower to postpone the invasion by 24 hours, but no longer. His landing troops needed the correct tides and the illumination offered by a full-ish moon. In the early hours of 6 June, the aerial bombardment began, with more than 2,000 Allied bombers releasing their payloads onto the coastline and further inland. Soon to follow were thousands of Allied paratroopers, each with knives, tommy guns, hand grenades, picks, spades and rubber dinghies attached to their person, ready to prepare the groundwork and secure the roads and waterways for the infantrymen to come. For each paratrooper, it was the first combat jump of their lives. As BBC correspondent Richard Dimbleby announced, these were “some of the toughest and finest and bravest men we have in Britain, and they go out today to face their greatest trial”.

When the infantrymen, tanks and amphibious vehicles arrived after dawn, they found the beaches of Normandy difficult terrain, strewn as they were with obstacles laid by the Germans. Field Marshal Rommel, in charge of fortifying France’s coastline, had tripled the number of land mines. Progress was slower than anticipated. The beaches had been split into five sectors by the Allies and the hope was that these would be unified by the end of the first day. This proved wishful thinking, as did the intention to capture the strategically important town of Caen within 24 hours. It eventually fell under Allied control a full 45 days later.

If the initial successes weren’t as definitive as was hoped, Churchill was relieved that the carnage of the Somme had been avoided. That day, he twice addressed a packed House of Commons in

### BIG NEWS

US servicemen read about the launch of Operation Overlord on 6 June 1944





## HUGE FEAT

Hundreds of flat-hulled landing craft deposited troops and supplies along the Normandy coast



bullish mood. "So far, the commanders... report that everything is proceeding according to plan," he announced. "And what a plan!" Four hours later, he informed them of the collateral damage: "There is very much less loss than we expected." Even so, out of approximately 156,000 Allied troops landing in France on that first day, more than 4,000 had been killed, compared to around 1,000 Germans.

Churchill's desire to see the operation first hand came to fruition a few days later, when he boarded HMS *Kelvin* and sailed to Normandy. While observing a British destroyer firing at sites inland, he insisted on going aboard, as he had "never been on one of His Majesty's ships engaging the enemy". That he couldn't actually climb onto the ship didn't stop him proudly boasting to Roosevelt that "we went and had a plug at the Hun from our destroyer".

Despite the misplaced optimism that the war would be over within the calendar year of 1944, and despite his grave concerns at certain points in the operation's long and drawn-out preparation, Churchill's vigour helped energise the campaign which, ultimately, led to the



## PM ABOARD

Ever the adventure-seeker, Churchill boarded HMS *Kelvin* to watch operations

surrender of the Nazis and the liberation of Europe.

But the actions of 6 June 1944 came at a cost for him on the world stage. As the historian Christopher Catherwood concludes, "D-Day was probably the last major military operation of the war in which the British fought as equals with the United States. Thereafter, the American contribution was inevitably far larger, and as a result the relative importance of the two nations changed considerably, with Britain becoming the junior partner. Churchill was to come to understand this with increasing sorrow as the campaign progressed." ●

# OPERATION OVERLORD IN NUMBERS

- **9 million** tonnes of supplies and equipment crossed the Atlantic from the US to Britain in the first half of **1944**.
- Prior to the invasion, over **2.8 million** troops from **12** countries were housed in **1,000** bases and camps in Britain.
- Around **156,000** Allied troops landed in Normandy on the first day of the invasion: **61,715** British soldiers, **73,000** American and **21,400** Canadian.
- By the end of the fifth day, **326,547** Allied troops had landed, with **54,186** vehicles and **104,428** tonnes of supplies.
- Over **425,000** Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or went missing during the battle of Normandy.
- Around **20,000** French civilians were killed. The city of Caen was reduced to rubble when US bombers seeking to knock out German communication lines missed their targets, killing around **600** civilians.
- In **March 1945**, British and American troops crossed the Rhine, eventually linking up with Soviet forces at the River Elbe.
- Germany unconditionally surrendered on **7 May 1945**, 11 months after D-Day.

US troops train in Britain before deployment for D-Day







The War Years

# BRAVE NEW WORLD

In spring 1945, with victory finally in sight, the Allied leaders met at Yalta to plan a post-Nazi world. Amid the late-night drinking, simmering tensions and conflicting agendas, Churchill was out on a limb and outmanoeuvred

BY JONNY WILKES

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### THE BIG THREE

Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin meet in February 1945 to make plans for healing war-torn Europe – a meeting at which Churchill's influence was fading fast







Looking over the Rhine from the west bank at Wesel, northwest Germany, Churchill beheld a sight he had long hoped for: Nazi

territory, now in the hands of the Allies. Berlin, and the end of the war, felt a little nearer.

The vast operation to cross the Rhine – Operation Plunder – was launched on the night of 23 March 1945, with Churchill watching from Field Marshal Montgomery’s headquarters in Venlo, southeast Netherlands, near the German border. He saw the four-hour artillery bombardment, the airborne landings of some 16,000 paratroopers and infantry crossings and, once the eastern side had been secured, he wanted to experience the breakthrough on the ground for himself.

Having been denied his request to watch the D-Day landings from a battlecruiser the previous June, Churchill waited until Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower had left their lunch together on 25 March before suggesting to Montgomery that they make their own crossing. “We landed in brilliant sunshine and perfect peace on the German shore, and walked about for half an hour or so unmolested,” he would recall. From the Rhine, ultimate victory, as discussed and planned in conference rooms for months, now seemed real.

## PLAN FOR PEACE

In late January 1945, Hitler’s last-ditch offensive at the Battle of the Bulge had been repulsed, allowing Allied forces in the west to advance towards Berlin while the Soviets came in from the east. To organise the last push, and look towards postwar recovery, a meeting was arranged between Churchill, US President Franklin D Roosevelt (FDR) and Soviet premier Josef Stalin.

Yalta hosted the conference of the ‘Big Three’ leaders on 4–11 February, but the Crimean city left Churchill far from impressed. He called it the “Riviera of Hades”. Bombed out and hard to reach, he declared to an advisor: “If we had spent ten years on research, we could not have

found a worse place in the world.” Stalin, in a preliminary flexing of his political muscles, had demanded the talks take place near him, saying that his doctors had warned against a long journey.

Each leader came to Yalta’s Livadia Palace with different objectives for a post-Nazi Europe, including how it should be split among the Allies. Stalin desired a sizeable sphere of influence in eastern Europe, which would double as a buffer zone from future invasions. President Roosevelt had one eye on establishing the United Nations and the other on seeking support in the Pacific front against Japan.

As for Churchill, his concerns focused on Poland. Britain had gone to war when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, and London had become the de facto home to its government-in-exile. Hundreds of thousands of Poles had fought alongside the British in north Africa. Churchill’s priority was to insist on free democratic elections to prevent Poland falling to

## “Churchill’s priority was to insist on free democratic elections for Poland”



### POLISH PROBLEM

Polish troops fighting with the allies in North Africa, 1941. Churchill’s hopes to secure a democratic future for the Poles were betrayed by Stalin after the talks

communism. To have any chance, he could not rely on Britain’s strength at the negotiating table, but his personal relationships within the Big Three.

Central to safeguarding the ‘Grand Alliance’ was his close friendship with FDR. Since the president had sent a note to Churchill in September 1939 congratulating him on his appointment to first lord of the Admiralty, the pair had enjoyed a correspondence of around 1,700 letters and telegrams. Whenever they met, FDR looked forward to his ‘Winston hours’ of staying up late, drinking, smoking and talking. The warm feelings were mutual – Churchill described meeting Roosevelt to be “like uncorking your first bottle of champagne”.

They did disagree – notably over Churchill’s preferred attack plan on the Nazis’ “soft underbelly” in the Mediterranean, in contrast to FDR’s commitment to Operation Overlord – but always understood the importance of the special relationship between their nations. Churchill ended one reconciliatory letter with the phrase, in Latin: “Lovers’ quarrels always go with true love.”

As for Stalin, the relationship was one of convenience. Churchill had voiced his fears of the Bolshevik threat as far back as the First World War, but, as he famously said: “If Hitler invaded Hell, I would at least make a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.” After Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, he gave a broadcast on 22 June pledging British support with the words, “The Russian danger is therefore our danger”.

The Russian bear and British bulldog managed to work together, notably during a secret meeting in 1944 when Churchill drew up his “naughty document” – the scrap of paper on which he scrawled the ‘percentages agreement’ for the divisions of postwar Europe. He discovered another way to please Stalin: drinking. Foreign Office reports from a 1942 visit to Moscow revealed that Churchill and

Stalin, who was drinking something “pretty savage”, stayed up late into the night, and that their merrymaking helped with their talks.





### END IN SIGHT

Unable to resist crossing the Rhine on 25 March 1945, Churchill steps onto enemy land just days after Eisenhower's armies. But, far from the centre of the action, his goal of reaching Berlin before the Soviets would be thwarted



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### 'WINSTON HOURS'

President Roosevelt enjoyed a strong personal relationship with Churchill, the pair often staying up late, drinking, smoking and talking. At Yalta, however, neither leader held the cards

### BROKEN TRUST

"Poor Neville Chamberlain believed he could trust Hitler. He was wrong, but I don't think I am wrong about Stalin," said Churchill. However, he had badly misjudged Stalin's ambitions for communist expansion





At Yalta, Stalin held the stronger position over both Churchill and an ill and increasingly frail FDR as the Red Army had advanced into Germany and, with the crossing of the Rhine still six weeks away, looked unchallenged in reaching Berlin first. Stalin was calm, collected and even urbane during the week of talks and banquets, knowing that FDR could do little to refuse his demands. As one of the American delegates, James F Byrnes, said: "It was not a question of what we would let the Russians do, but what we could get the Russians to do."

### BETRAYAL OF POLAND

The 70-year-old, travel-weary Churchill, while still bullish and determined, was left isolated and so had limited impact on the decisions made. Germany would be disarmed and split into four sectors, with the Soviets taking the east, and the US, Britain and France each with a zone in the west; war criminals would be tried in an international court; and a council to organise reparation payments would be established in the Soviet Union.

Churchill and FDR agreed to return all Soviet citizens found in their sectors, whether they be prisoners of war or fleeing refugees, and the Soviets agreed to join the United Nations (conditional to veto powers) and the war against Japan.

Most encouragingly for Churchill, Stalin promised to hold elections in Poland and other eastern European countries if the Soviets maintained control. A three-day grilling from parliament awaited Churchill back home over not securing better terms for Poland. But he trusted that elections would be held: "Poor Neville Chamberlain believed he could trust Hitler. He was wrong, but I don't think I am wrong about Stalin." Stalin, however, would betray his promise, going on to turn the countries into communist satellite states.

FDR, too, projected a positive message, telling congress that the world was on the road to peace. In truth, Yalta left the Allies divided other than in their absolute goal of crushing Hitler.

As the advance continued on both sides, Churchill faced another onslaught just days after the conference, following the controversial bombings of the German city of Dresden. Whether the raids, which killed as many as 25,000 people, consti-

## "His many messages to Stalin urging him to keep his word went unanswered"

tuted a war crime is still debated, as is Churchill's involvement. He attempted to distance himself from Dresden and threw himself back into the war effort, travelling to the Rhine in March.

### CLOSING IN ON BERLIN

The Allied victory, now inevitable, came at a cost. The Red Army raced towards Berlin, committing atrocities along the way, which Churchill now feared, rightly, would befall Poland. His many messages to Stalin urging him to keep his word went unanswered, and he repeated his call for US and British forces to get as far east as they could before the Soviets. Germans were just as eager for this, and headed west in huge numbers to surrender. The Soviets entered Berlin in late April and, following Hitler's suicide, it fell to his replacement Admiral Karl Dönitz to order Germany's unconditional surrender on 7 May.

Churchill found out the news at 7am, and informed the nation in a radio broadcast that evening, declaring 8 May as Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Celebrations erupted around Britain, with people dancing in the streets, waving flags, singing and lighting bonfires. Bunting was hung, thanks to the board of trade lifting rationing on red, white and blue material. A conga line ran down London's Piccadilly and thousands crowded into Trafalgar Square, the Mall and outside Buckingham Palace. George VI and his family appeared eight times. Church bells rang for the first time in years, thanksgiving services were held and the pubs did a booming trade.

From a balcony at Whitehall, Churchill shouted to those amassed: "In all our long history, we have never seen a greater day than this!" When he added "this is your victory", he was met by a



### RED ARMY ARRIVES

A Soviet tank at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate in late April. Hitler committed suicide on 30 April and by 2 May the Reichstag had fallen. The city would be divided into four sectors by the Allies

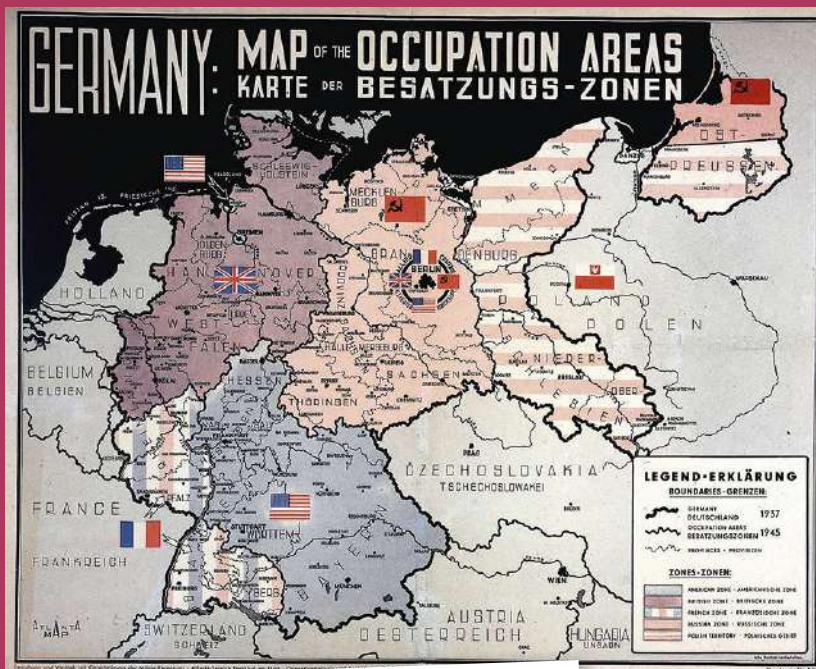


### VICTORY AT LAST

Revellers in London celebrate the end of the war (above), as Churchill joins the royal family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to enjoy the cheers of the grateful crowds (below)







chorus of “No, it’s yours!” His concerns about the spread of communism could wait a day.

Yet while celebrations took place in the major cities of the US, the largest in New York, Americans considered VE Day as only halfway there. In his address to the nation, President Truman dedicated the victory to FDR, who had died on 12 April, adding: “If I could give you a single watchword for the coming months, that word is work, work and more work. We must work to finish the war.”

There was still a war to win and a continent to rebuild, so the Big Three gathered again, this time at Potsdam in July 1945. The Soviets pledged to join the war against Japan in return for territory, but in the end the US did not need their help – as Truman had hinted during their talks, they had a new weapon of “unusual” destructive power. In August the world would see the effect of the nuclear bomb when two were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Churchill went to Potsdam worried, suspicious and distracted. Having told his doctor, “I don’t want to do anything. I have no energy. I wonder if it will come back,” he did not look at Foreign Office documents, rambled during negotiations and left the conference halfway through. He had been told news that stunned him – that even though he had been the man Britain needed in the war, he was not the man for the peace. ●

## CARVING UP EUROPE

A map shows the postwar zones occupied by the US, the Soviet Union, Britain and France. Churchill’s part, however, was over – he would leave the Potsdam conference in July 1945 (left) early to return to a Britain that had voted him from power



GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY



## TROUBLE AT THE POLLS

Churchill’s approval rating was 83 per cent before the general election of July 1945. He was a beloved war hero, but the war was won and Clement Attlee’s Labour Party offered sweeping social reforms, including the National Health Service and the welfare state, under the slogan “Let’s face the future”. After a poor, arrogant campaign, Churchill lost.







Pictured on his 71st birthday in 1945. Voted out of office that year, Churchill seemed – like Britain – a power in decline. But, as the Cold War started, he was reluctant to lose his political clout





# A LEADER'S LEGACY

Life after the war,  
Churchill's homes, his role  
in the Cold War and his  
legacy for future generations



## A Leader's Legacy

# COLD WARRIOR

The war was won. But in a small town in Missouri, Churchill delivered a controversial but prophetic message: that the west's wartime alliance with the Soviet Union was in tatters and a new Cold War was beginning

BY EUGENE BYRNE

**O**n 5 March 1946, tens of thousands of sightseers and well-wishers descended on the little town of Fulton, Missouri to see two of the world's most famous men. The town had never seen such a grand occasion, and crowds jostled to catch a glimpse as Churchill and President Truman were driven to Westminster College in an open-top car. News cameras were there to record the occasion, and the speech that Churchill was to make, with the president sitting close by, would be relayed to radio listeners across America.

When he rose to speak, Churchill became the first leading statesman in the west to say in public what a growing

number of decision-makers believed in private: that the Soviet Union was an enemy of liberal democracy. The speech was an opening shot in the Cold War, the long and dangerous standoff between the democracies of North America and western Europe and Soviet-led communism – a global chess game that would dominate world affairs until 1989.

### REJECTED BY BRITAIN

Churchill was now out of power, but determined to still play a role on the world stage. The months before the speech had been difficult for him; the 'black dog' of his depression had stalked him relentlessly.

Seven months previously he had returned to 10 Downing Street from meeting Stalin and Truman at the Potsdam Conference for the results of the

UK general election. As the verdicts from each constituency trickled in, it became clear that he and the Conservative Party were being voted out of power and Labour, led by Clement Attlee, his deputy in the wartime all-party coalition, had been swept into office in a landslide.

While Churchill was widely respected and admired for his wartime leadership, the British people, who had made so many sacrifices during the war, now demanded real and permanent change. They associated his Conservative party with the deprivations of the 1930s depression, and with Chamberlain's policy of appeasement that had caused the war. Churchill was widely mistrusted on the left, particularly after his aggressive stance during the General Strike of 1926, and came in for particular criticism after a





### RED WARNING

Churchill delivers his prescient 'Iron Curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri, in March 1946

“ From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, **an iron curtain has descended across the continent.** Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia; all these famous cities and the populations around them **lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere...** The communist parties... have been raised to preeminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to **obtain totalitarian control.** ”





**WARM WELCOME**

Churchill in Fulton to deliver his controversial speech about the "indefinite expansion of Russian power"

ridiculous claim during the election campaign that Attlee would organise a 'Gestapo' to enforce Labour's rule.

As he and his aides watched the outcome from each parliamentary seat being marked on a map at Downing Street, his wife observed that it might be a blessing in disguise. "It seems quite effectively disguised," he replied. He was in such a distracted state that the next morning the room was scattered with half-smoked cigars and as many half-drunk glasses of brandy. He and Clementine immediately left Downing Street to take up temporary residence at the Brook Suite at Claridge's, one of the grandest hotels in London.

## "The message was controversial – most Britons and Americans still considered Russia an ally"

But the following months were some of the most difficult of Churchill's life. The rapid switch to enforced idleness plunged him into bouts of foul temper and bleak depression. Clementine wrote to their daughter Mary: "In our misery we seem, instead of clinging to each other, to be always having scenes... I'm finding life more difficult than I can bear." Accustomed to the finest things in life, he was now subject to the same meagre food rations as every other Briton, snapping angrily at his wife and his staff when served tiny portions of meat at mealtimes.

He did, however, opt to carry on as leader of the Conservatives and there was no shortage of opportunities to play the statesman. The Churchills hired extra staff to handle all the mail he was receiving from around the world. He turned down a huge number of invitations. "I refuse to be exhibited like a prize bull whose chief attraction is his past prowess," he growled.

The letter asking him to speak at a college in Missouri was different though. It came with the hand-written endorsement of President Truman: "Hope you can do it. I'll introduce you."

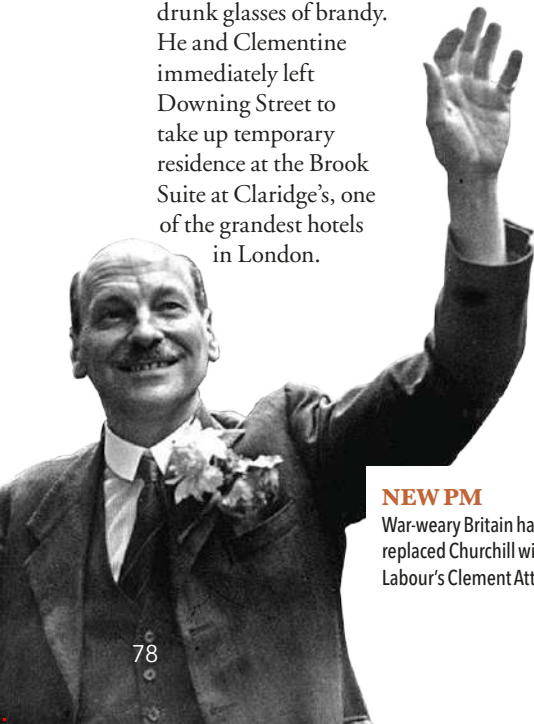
### RED PERIL

Churchill had been an implacable enemy of communism since the Russian Revolution. He had been no friend to organised labour or even social democracy before and since, but reality often blunted his views. During the war he had worked well with Attlee, though often treating him with disdain. He forged a very strong partnership with Labour politician Ernest Bevin, the gruff trade union leader who became his wartime minister of labour.

Wartime pragmatism had also led him to support Tito's communist partisans in Yugoslavia instead of the right-wing 'Chetnik' resistance. He also hoped that Josef Stalin was a man he could do business with.

### NEW PM

War-weary Britain had replaced Churchill with Labour's Clement Attlee





## EASTERN BLOCK

Western Allies deliver supplies to West Berliners after Stalin blockades the city in 1948 – the first major crisis of the Cold War



That business could be cynical. For example, the notorious occasion in 1944 when he had proposed that Britain and the USSR divide the Balkan nations into “spheres of influence”, expressed as percentages. Stalin had honoured his part of the bargain to give Britain “90% influence” in Greece by withdrawing support from Greek communists.

But the fear that all of Germany might fall into the Soviet grip prompted Churchill to urge Roosevelt to march on Berlin before the Soviets could capture it, and at the war’s end he was horrified when Stalin planned to take control of Poland. Later, he would urge Truman to use America’s atomic weapons to deliver an ultimatum to the Soviet Union.

## CRITICAL REACTION

The ‘Iron Curtain’ speech caused a huge stir. Even though Stalin’s designs on eastern Europe were in plain view, and opponents of the new Soviet masters in various countries were being murdered or ‘disappeared’, the message was controversial. The Soviet people were admired in Britain and America for their part in the war; most Britons and Americans still considered Russia an ally.

British and American newspaper editorials were critical of the speech.

These ranged from the measured tones of *The Times* in London (“western democracy and communism... have much to learn from each other”) to more forthright denunciations in many American papers. US magazine *The Nation* said Churchill had “added a sizeable measure of poison to the already deteriorating relations between Russia and the Western powers”.

Stalin also hit back. In an interview with a Soviet newspaper he said that “friendship” with eastern European states was a necessary safeguard against future invasion. He even compared Churchill’s talk of the “special relationship” between Britain and the US to Hitler’s racial theorising. Churchill, he said, believed that “only nations speaking the English language are fully valuable nations, called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world”.

But Churchill was expressing a view increasingly widely held in Washington and Whitehall. Though he denied it when the furore erupted, Truman had read and approved the speech beforehand.

At this time, Churchill would also become one of the founding fathers of what is now the European Union, encouraging western European states to band together in a ‘United States of Europe’ that would both promote



## SOVIET SPREAD

A 1951 American cartoon depicts Stalin’s ‘new imperialism’, a growing empire of Soviet-ruled satellite states and communist-backed regimes

economic development and make future wars among them impossible. Implicit was that it would also build unity in the face of any eastern European threat.

In the event, Britain’s Labour government played a key role in standing up to Soviet aggression during the Berlin Blockade of 1948, when Stalin prevented western access to West Berlin, and in the formation of NATO in 1949. Returned to office in 1951, Churchill supported western defence efforts wholeheartedly – but it may be that his biggest intervention in the Cold War was the speech warning of the dangers of Soviet ambitions in a small town in Missouri in 1946. ●





Photo Album

# FINDING CHURCHILL

From his luxurious ancestral home and quiet countryside haven to the underground bunker where he conducted the war, we look at the places that shaped the prime minister

BY ELLIE CAWTHORNE



## BLENHEIM PALACE

Set in 2,000 acres of rolling Oxfordshire parkland, this magnificent baroque stately home is the aristocratic seat of the Churchill family. It was built in the early 18th century for John Churchill, the 1st Duke of Marlborough, to celebrate his victory over the French during the War of the Spanish Succession. Blenheim is the only palace in the UK that doesn't belong to either the church or crown.

→ [Read more about Blenheim on the next page](#)







**BLenheim PALACE,  
OXFORDSHIRE  
HIS ANCESTRAL HOME**

"At Blenheim I took two very important decisions; to be born and to marry," said Churchill. "I am content with the decision I took on both occasions."

The first of those two 'decisions' took place on 30 November 1874, when the baby Winston was delivered in a small chamber off the great hall of his family's ancestral home. Various myths surround his premature birth – some say it was brought on by his mother's excitement at a ball, others a vigorous horse ride. The second decision came in 1908, when Winston proposed to Clementine Hozier. While walking in the grounds during a party, the couple were caught in the rain and took shelter in a summer house known as the Temple of Diana. It was here that Clementine accepted Winston's offer of marriage.

Like many of Britain's grand aristocratic houses, Blenheim was put to practical use during the Second World War. While Churchill was leading the fight against Hitler, the palace became home to evacuated schoolboys of Malvern College, who even took lessons in the bathrooms. The house and grounds were also transformed into a hub for MI5 operatives decamped from London to escape the Blitz.

→ Visit Blenheim Palace:  
[www.blenheimpalace.com](http://www.blenheimpalace.com)



**ST MARGARET'S,  
WESTMINSTER  
WHERE THE  
CHURCHILLS  
TIED THE KNOT**

Following a brief engagement, on 12 September 1908, Winston (aged 33) and Clementine (aged 23) took their marriage vows at St Margaret's Church, which sits in the shadow of London's spectacular Westminster Abbey.

After the ceremony, the newlyweds and their guests enjoyed a wedding breakfast at the London home of Clementine's great aunt, Lady St Helier. A junior minister at the time, Churchill was already well-connected; the couple received wedding gifts from some of Britain's most famous figures. Prime Minister Herbert Asquith presented them with the complete works of Jane Austen, while King Edward VII gifted a gold-topped walking stick.

Curiously, all the official photographs from the day have since vanished.

→ Visit St Margaret's Church:  
[www.westminster-abbey.org](http://www.westminster-abbey.org)

GETTY IMAGES / ALAMY





## CHARTWELL, KENT HIS COUNTRY HAVEN

"A day away from Chartwell is a day wasted," Churchill declared of his beloved country home. Yet although the redbrick Victorian house would go on to become a rural sanctuary for the prime minister, when he first bought the house in 1922 it was far from picture perfect. Old-fashioned and riddled with dry rot, the house had failed to sell at auction when Churchill acquired it. "I have been searching for a home in the country and the site is the most beautiful and charming I have ever seen," he wrote shortly after buying it. Entranced by the beautiful views, he was determined to transform it into a family home, despite spiralling renovation costs. As usual, his determination paid off. Throughout Churchill's life, Chartwell would be his haven – a place to escape from the extraordinary pressures placed on him.

Time there offered a chance to entertain friends and indulge in hobbies. One of his great passions was painting in his studio there (pictured below), and he even built several of the walls in the gardens by hand.

→ Visit Chartwell House:  
[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)



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### CABINET WAR ROOMS, WESTMINSTER WHERE HE LED THE WAR EFFORT

Hidden beneath the streets of London is the top-secret command centre from where Churchill – along with his top ministers and military strategists – conducted the war.

Guarded by marines and topped by five feet of concrete, the underground bunker was completed just one week before the outbreak of war, and its maze-like complex of corridors, offices and rooms remained a hive of activity right up until peace was declared in 1945. Churchill's private quarters included a bed, radio broadcasting equipment and even an encrypted transatlantic telephone room disguised as a toilet, where he could discreetly make contact with the US president. Notoriously difficult to work for, Churchill was driven to distraction by anything that disrupted his silence – his secretaries used specially adapted 'noiseless' typewriters imported from the US, while signs in the bunker's hallways strictly banned any "whistling or unnecessary noise".



→ Visit Churchill's War Rooms:  
[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)







### HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, WESTMINSTER THE SCENE OF HIS MOST ROUSING SPEECHES

It's little wonder that the Houses of Parliament were close to Churchill's heart: over his six-decade career there, its halls witnessed many of his triumphs, failures and some of his most blistering political speeches. Churchill even called himself a "child of the House of Commons" in reference to the fact that his father was first elected to parliament the year that Winston was born. When the Commons chamber was destroyed during the Blitz in May 1941, Churchill was involved in the new design. An ornate archway built from bomb-damaged stone is named after the prime minister, while a large bronze statue of him striding through rubble, hands defiantly on his hips, peers down over politicians in the Members' Lobby.

→ Visit the Houses of Parliament: [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)



### ST MARTIN'S, BLADON, OXFORDSHIRE WHERE THE LEADER IS LAID TO REST

On a grey Saturday morning in January 1965, mourners lined the streets of London to mark the state funeral of their wartime leader. The service – held at St Paul's Cathedral – was attended by royals, politicians and dignitaries from more than 100 countries, including US president Dwight Eisenhower, French president Charles De Gaulle and Queen Elizabeth II.

In accordance with his requests, Churchill's body was then transported to his family plot at St Martin's Church in the quiet Oxfordshire village of Bladon, just a stone's throw away from his birthplace at Blenheim Palace.

Today, a simple gravestone marks the spot where Winston and Clementine Churchill (who died in 1977) now lie side by side. ●

→ Visit St Martin's Church:  
[www.woodstockandbladon.com](http://www.woodstockandbladon.com)



GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY



## CHURCHILL RETURNS

With his reassuring trademark V-sign and cigar, a 76-year-old Churchill is returned to 10 Downing Street in 1951



TOPFOTO



A Leader's Legacy

# BACK IN OFFICE

In 1951 Churchill was prime minister again, grappling with troubles at home and abroad while battling old age and illness... but reluctant for it all to end

BY EUGENE BYRNE



On the evening of 23 February 1950, Churchill gathered with his family and friends at 27–28 Hyde Park Gate, the handsome red-brick house that he and Clementine were now using as their London home. They sat up until the small hours to listen to the incoming results of the general election. The picture was confusing, but by noon of the following day it was clear that Labour – Churchill's rivals – had won by a very narrow margin. He was not downhearted. "I think that another general election in the next few months is inevitable," he wrote to a friend. In fact, it would be another 20 months, but this time Churchill's Conservatives would triumph. The British public, weary of austerity, rationing and bureaucracy, in

October 1951 elected Churchill once more, shortly before his 77th birthday.

Until the war, Churchill had been distrusted by many in the Conservative Party, but despite the Labour victory of 1945, his position as party leader was unquestioned. Between 1945 and 1951,

**“Weary of  
austerity,  
rationing and  
bureaucracy, the  
public elected  
Churchill  
once more”**

however, he devoted little time to British politics. He worked on his history of the war, started painting again and rediscovered his love of horse-racing. He travelled to France and Italy to escape the gloom of a country where many things were still rationed. When not travelling, he and Clementine were usually at their beloved Chartwell home in Kent. By 1951, his age and evident lack of interest in domestic politics meant his position as leader had become more controversial. The party's strong performance in the general election owed little to his own campaigning efforts and more to younger men, some of whom quietly wished he would retire.

## EMPIRE IN DECLINE

In office Churchill continued to take little interest in home affairs. He defined his strategy to an aide as “houses, meat and not being scuppered” – that is, building







“Even as he took office, everyone could see that he was **no longer the dynamic leader he had once been**”

hopes to “forward the cause of peace”, did not go ahead with the meeting.

## HEALTH PROBLEMS

The decline of Britain as a world power was matched by the decline of Churchill's own faculties. Even as he took office, everyone could see that he was no longer the dynamic leader he had once been. The prime minister was also going deaf. He had suffered a mild stroke in 1949, and in early 1952 experienced a spell of confusion caused by a cerebral artery spasm. This was kept a closely guarded secret.

In June 1953, he and Clementine were hosting a dinner at Downing Street in honour of the Italian prime minister, Alcide de Gasperi, when Churchill appeared to fall back into his chair. Signor de Gasperi was told that the prime minister was “over-tired” and the other guests seem to have assumed that he had drunk a little too much wine. He was put to bed and doctors confirmed the

GETTY IMAGES

homes, ending food rationing and opting for a quiet life. Pensions and welfare benefits were increased, labour unions were conciliated and food rationing ended completely in 1954. A new ministry of housing set about building 300,000 new homes each year. Successfully avoiding major problems at home meant that Churchill could focus on world affairs; in practice, this meant managing the decline of the British empire and British influence. India, the ‘Jewel in the Crown’, had won its independence in 1947, and other colonies were increasingly assertive in their demands for freedom. Churchill, the staunch imperialist, was determined not to “preside over a dismemberment” of empire, and dispatched troops to quell the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya and quash rebels in Malaya. In partnership with the

US he connived at the overthrow of Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, who had deprived Britain of control of Iran's oil industry.

Yet relations between Britain and America were far from smooth. Both countries were firm partners in the fight against communism – most notably in the Korean War – but, as Churchill had found in the Second World War, the “special relationship” did not extend to America bankrolling British imperialism.

Seeking to bolster British influence and his own legacy, he urged the US to agree to a summit conference with the Soviet Union, hoping to take the chance afforded by Stalin's death in 1953 to try to bring an end to the Cold War. But the now rigidly anti-Communist President Eisenhower stonewalled, and Churchill, alone with his



## COLONIAL REVOLT

Churchill tried to quell the tide of independence movements across Britain's worldwide colonies, including bombing the Mau Mau who resisted white settler expansion and brutality in Kenya



## HOUSING BOOM

At home, the Conservatives pursued an ambitious plan to build 300,000 new homes a year, Churchill telling Harold Macmillan, the minister charged with the task, that “every humble home will bless your name if you succeed”





### BOWING OUT

Aged 80, and having suffered several strokes, Churchill finally retired on 5 April 1955

following morning that the prime minister had had another stroke.

Nonetheless, Churchill insisted on chairing a scheduled meeting of his ministers the next day, where none apparently noticed anything unusual. He was then spirited away to Chartwell. He was losing the use of his left arm and leg and needed constant nursing.

All of this was kept secret from everyone but the Queen and a handful of ministers, family and friends. The owners of most of the country's newspapers agreed to keep the news from the public. He would probably have been forced out of office in different circumstances. His obvious successor was the foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, a suave and charismatic figure who was well-known and popular with the public. At that very moment, though, Eden had serious health problems of his own, triggered by a botched gall bladder operation.

### TIME TO GO

Resting at Chartwell, Churchill recovered; by the autumn he was speaking at the Conservative Party conference and met Eisenhower in Bermuda in December. Eden, however, was becoming impatient as his own health returned. Behind the scenes there was talk of how Churchill was visibly ageing more each day, reading fewer official papers. His deafness was also a problem. Some suggested that his 80th

birthday in November 1954 would be a good time to go.

Historians argue as to whether he jumped or was pushed. The answer seems to be a combination of both. Limits on parliamentary terms meant that there would have to be a general election within the year, and Churchill's abilities to lead the party in it were doubtful. For the sake of the party he would have to give Eden the chance to take over. Finally, in March 1955, aged 80, he agreed that he would retire in early April.

Those days were a time of great inner turmoil. He knew his powers were failing, he knew his party (and most of the British public) felt it was time for him to go, but he still believed that he had a contribution to make.

On the evening of 4 April, he and Clementine hosted a farewell dinner at Downing Street for the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke later wrote to Clementine thanking her. "It was such a friendly and happy occasion that I find it hard to realise that it must have been a rather sad moment for you."

After the guests had left, an aide had found Churchill upstairs, sitting on his bed. For many minutes he was silent, but then angrily spat out: "I don't believe Anthony [Eden] can do it!"

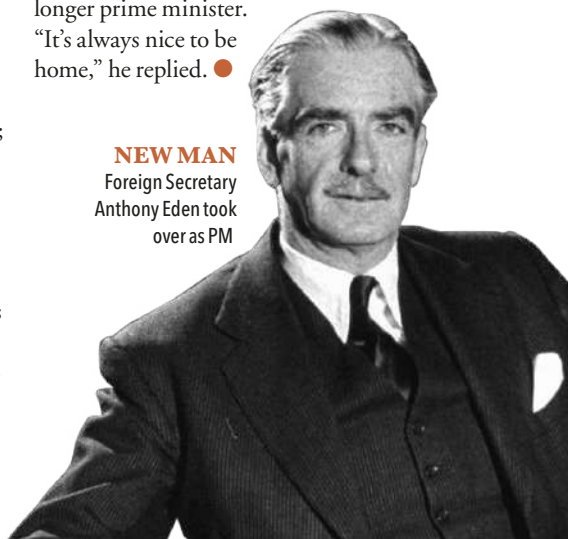
On 6 April 1955, Churchill conducted his last business as prime minister and that afternoon gave a party at 10 Downing Street for around 100 of his staff. As he left to be driven away, drivers, secretaries, telephone operators and others lined his way to the front door.

Later, when the car reached Chartwell, there was a small group of well-wishers and journalists at the gate. One of the reporters asked how he felt now he was no longer prime minister.

"It's always nice to be home," he replied. ●

### NEW MAN

Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden took over as PM



## CHURCHILL AND THE QUEEN

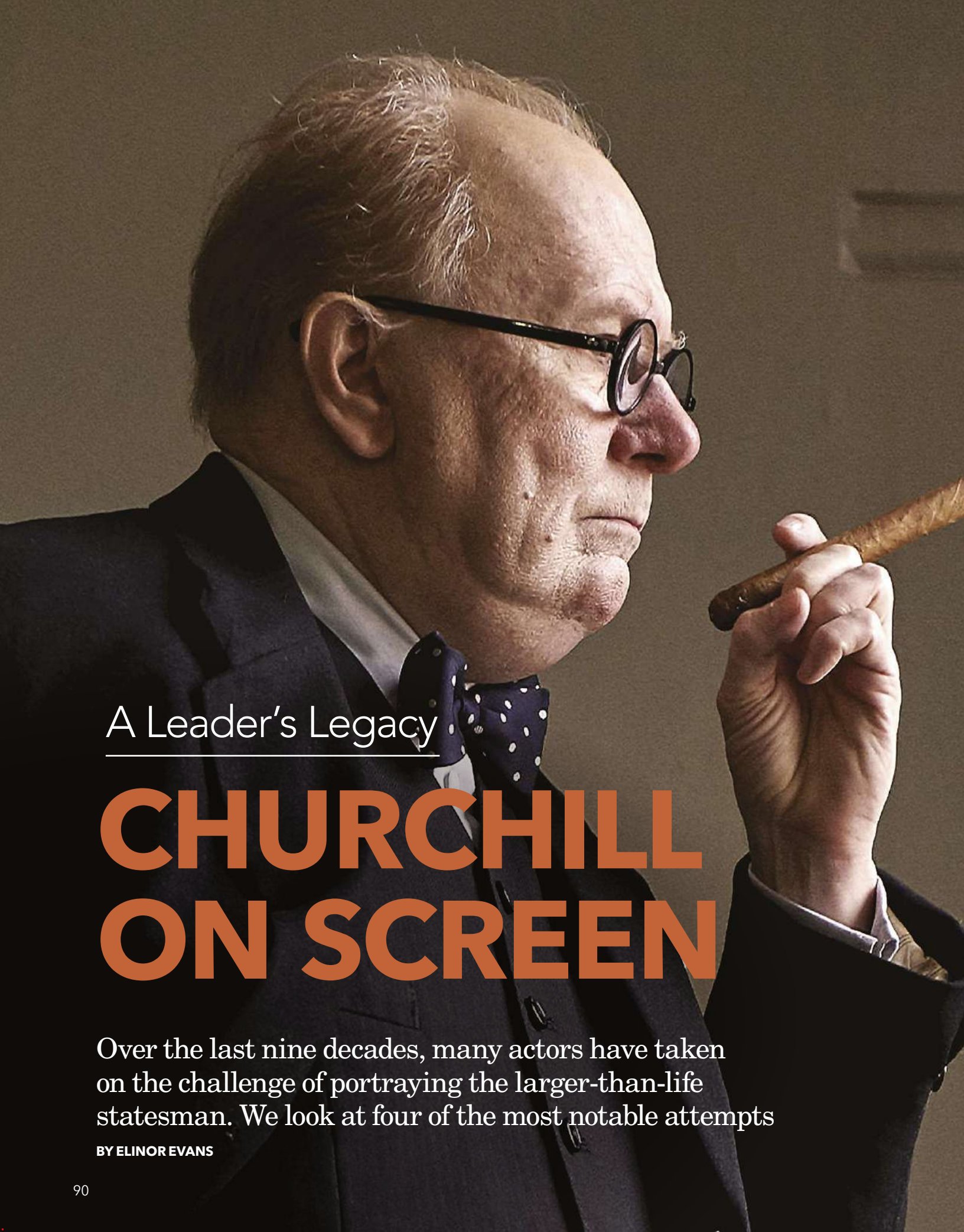
Churchill's regard for the new young Queen Elizabeth II bordered on veneration. Looking at a photo of her, he said, half to himself: "Lovely, inspiring. All the film people in the world, if they had scoured the globe, could not have found anyone so suited to the part."

All Elizabeth's life thus far had been spent in training for her role, but when she succeeded to the throne in February 1952, she welcomed the guidance of the statesman over 50 years her senior. Of all the prime ministers who served under her, Churchill was probably her favourite. Both relished their weekly meetings. Buckingham Palace staff gossiped about the gales of laughter from behind the closed doors of consultations which grew from 30 minutes to sometimes more than two hours. Churchill encouraged her to take an active role in the Commonwealth as a means of promoting Britain's post-colonial influence. She has remained solidly committed to the Commonwealth ever since.

When Churchill had his stroke in 1953, Elizabeth was one of the few people to be told. She invited the Churchills to Balmoral on the royal train, a break he greatly enjoyed and which helped him recover.

Through her private secretary the Queen also persuaded him to accept the Order of the Garter and, on his resignation in 1955, she wrote to him, praising "my first prime minister, to whom both my husband and I owe so much and for whose wise guidance during the early years of my reign I shall always be so profoundly grateful".





A Leader's Legacy

# CHURCHILL ON SCREEN

Over the last nine decades, many actors have taken on the challenge of portraying the larger-than-life statesman. We look at four of the most notable attempts

BY ELINOR EVANS



In an early scene of the 2017 blockbuster *Darkest Hour* (pictured), Gary Oldman's Churchill turns to a wall covered in assorted hats, from his customary bowlers to top hats and military caps, and wonders: "Which self should I be today?"

It's a question that's been addressed by more than 200 films, television programmes and plays over the last nine decades: which aspect of Churchill's character and actions to explore next?

The first film to portray Churchill did so before he even became prime minister: *Royal Cavalcade* (1935), a docudrama about the reign of George V in which the politician was played by CM Hallard. Since then, episodes from Churchill's life have been reimagined by every generation, from his time as a youthful officer and war correspondent during the Boer War in *Young Winston* (1972) to his ageing and ill health in *The Crown* (2016). Audiences have even been introduced to Winston in the nude, when Albert Finney stripped off for his award-winning performance in *The Gathering Storm* (2002).

Taking on a figure of such legendary status is a unique - and intimidating - challenge. Irish actor Brendan Gleeson, who won an Emmy for 2009's *Into the Storm*, revealed that he "had to get the idea of him as a hero out of my head". Robert Hardy, who went on to portray the statesman no less than nine times, also balked initially at playing him: "I thought it an absurd and inappropriate idea... I grew up listening to Churchill." Even Gary Oldman refused the role until he was sure that prosthetics could achieve the physical transformation needed to emulate the iconic leader. As it turned out, he needn't have worried - playing Winston won him an Academy Award.

SHUTTERSTOCK/ALEX BAILEY-NETFLIX



*The Crown* focuses on the leader's relationship with Britain's new queen

## The Crown (2016)

### An American as the ageing Winston

One of the most popular recent portrayals of the great Briton has been by an American: seasoned film and theatre actor John Lithgow, in the award-winning Netflix drama *The Crown*. Given that the drama centres on the royal family, it's not surprising that there's much focus on Churchill's relationship with the royals: first King George VI, and then Queen Elizabeth II. The almost 52-year age difference between the Queen (played by Claire Foy) and Churchill makes for a fascinating on-screen dynamic, as the 'father of the nation' attempts to balance his many years of experience with deference to the much younger monarch.

The Churchill we meet in *The Crown* is beyond the years of his wartime glory, out of power (for now) and in his seventies. Yet when he is introduced in the first episode, he still stage-manages every occasion, timing his arrival at Princess Elizabeth's wedding to the Duke of Edinburgh in 1947 so that he is the final guest to arrive. As he enters with wife Clementine (Harriet Walter) and processes solemnly up the aisle to

the strains of the patriotic hymn, 'I Vow to Thee, My Country', the guests rise to their feet.

An amused Anthony Eden and Lord Salisbury look on, with the latter asking: "Has Winston no shame? It's a royal wedding, not a campaign trail."

"He's outrageous," adds Eden. "But you have to admire him."

Some have remarked on Lithgow's height being a distracting factor that prevents a true portrayal: though the actor stoops to play Churchill, at 6ft 4ins he is often still taller than those around him. For the real Churchill, standing at around 5ft 6ins, this would have been a much rarer experience.

However, Lithgow brings both wit and gravitas to the role, tinged with slight fatigue. When Churchill is re-elected in 1951 at the age of 76, the drama contrasts his political glory with his failing health, showing Churchill's 1953 stroke. While in reality Churchill *did* suffer a stroke in 1953, it's not thought that he hid this from the Queen in order to continue with his duties, as writer Peter Morgan suggests.





## The Wilderness Years (1981)

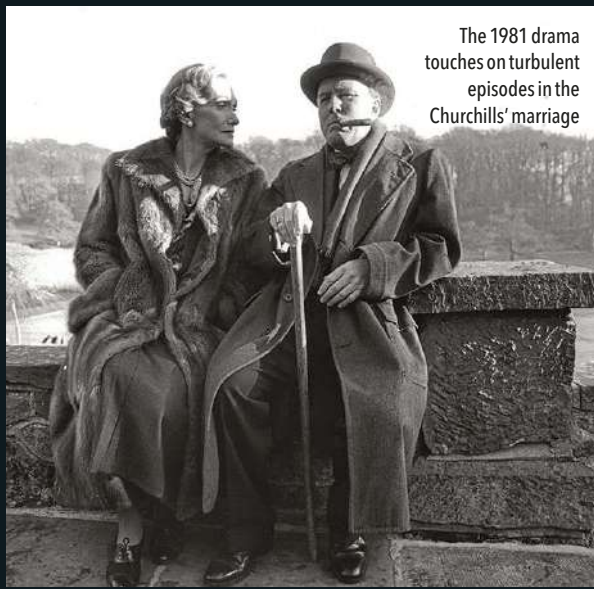
### The definitive Churchill?

For many viewers, British actor Robert Hardy (1925–2017) remains the quintessential on-screen Churchill, portraying the politician nine times over four decades in various stage and screen productions. *The Wilderness Years* is often cited as the best on-screen depiction of Churchill, earning Hardy a BAFTA.

In the opening episode of the eight-part drama, Churchill is unpopular within his party; senior Conservative Sir Samuel Hoare reports to prime minister Stanley Baldwin that Churchill has become “something of a liability”. Sure enough, after the Conservatives lose in the 1929 general election, Hardy’s 54-year-old Churchill steps down as the chancellor of the exchequer. The drama sweeps over the next decade, through his years in political exile – what Churchill dubbed his “years in the wilderness” – to 1939, when he is offered a role in Neville Chamberlain’s government. It doesn’t shy away from exploring Churchill’s personal faults, showing his less-than-perfect marriage to Clementine (played by Siân Phillips) and harsh parenting of his son Randolph (Nigel Havers), though it balances them with Churchill’s brilliance: his prolific historical writing and his role as a rare voice calling for action against the rising military power of Germany in the early 1930s.

Though *The Wilderness Years* was the first time Hardy played Churchill, he was no stranger to the character. In earlier productions he had played opposite two versions of Churchill: in 1972’s *Young Winston* as a malicious schoolmaster of Simon Ward’s Churchill; and in 1974 as Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Nazi foreign minister, alongside Richard Burton in *The Gathering Storm*.

The actor spent nine months preparing for the role. “I’m a devotee of the man. I think he’s the greatest Englishman probably who ever lived,” Hardy told the BBC in 2011.



The 1981 drama touches on turbulent episodes in the Churchills’ marriage



Brian Cox’s Churchill is weighed down by memories of the First World War

## Churchill (2017)

### A controversial take

Perhaps the most contentious portrayal of the prime minister in recent times, *Churchill* features Scottish actor Brian Cox and is set during the days leading up to D-Day.

The film opens with Churchill alone on a beach in 1944, blood mingling with the waves as he stands by the shore. “Beaches always bring it back, almost 30 years ago now... so many young men, so much waste,” he reflects.

The Churchill presented by screenwriter Alex von Tunzelmann and director Jonathan Teplitzky is very much afflicted by depression and scarred by the devastation of campaigns such as Gallipoli in 1915–16. Terrified of seeing “beaches choked with British and American youths”, Cox’s Churchill takes up a position against plans for D-Day and clashes with Allied military leaders, including General Montgomery (Julian Wadham) and General Eisenhower (John Slattery). Perhaps most remarkably, the film sees Churchill praying for bad weather to scupper the operation: “for wind to tear up the beaches and spin the sand into storms.”

The dramatic basis for the film – that Churchill was initially opposed to the

D-Day invasion – attracted criticism from some historians: Churchill biographer Andrew Roberts called the film “a catalogue of errors which paints an entirely false picture of Churchill”, and in another instance, “easily the worst Churchill movie ever made”.

Addressing the controversy, Tunzelmann explained how, in a meeting with Allied military leaders, “Churchill stood up and said: ‘Gentlemen I am hardening to this exercise. I repeat: I am now hardening to this exercise.’”

“This statement shocked Eisenhower, as he thought this meant that Churchill hadn’t supported D-Day all along. That was the jumping off point dramatically for the film – the idea that even just three weeks before the operation Churchill had serious doubts about it.”

Miranda Richardson’s poised performance as Clementine, a straight-talking foil for Churchill’s changes of tack and emotionally-charged outbursts, is a highlight. However, a scene in which she slaps Churchill across the face attracted further criticism from some viewers, who felt that it wasn’t an accurate representation of their relationship.





Kristin Scott Thomas has won plaudits for her role as Churchill's wife Clementine

## Darkest Hour (2017)

### An intimate and nuanced portrait

*Darkest Hour* features a prosthetics-clad portrayal which earned Gary Oldman an Academy Award and is already being hailed as one of the best depictions of the man.

We join the action in May 1940, as Neville Chamberlain steps down as prime minister and a new leader is sought for the wartime coalition government. Despite widespread support for Viscount Halifax (Stephen Dillane), Churchill is deemed "the only man the opposition will accept".

It's an intimate portrayal, taking us into Churchill's private chambers as he dictates telegrams from the bath or enjoys brandy with his breakfast. Oldman's Churchill is irreverent and animated, playful with his staff and refers to Halifax as the "Reverend Holy Fox". Kristin Scott Thomas's performance as Clementine has also been widely praised, as the woman resigned

to "eternally coming second" but supporting her husband with warmth, patience and intelligence.

Partially drawn from minutes from Churchill's war cabinet meetings, Anthony McCarten's script pits Churchill against Halifax and Chamberlain, who consider negotiating for peace with Germany as we see the British army trapped on the north coast of France with little hope of escape.

Yet Churchill refuses to engage in peace talks, promising "blood, toil, tears and sweat", demanding "victory at all costs", and stubbornly pursuing Operation Dynamo (which would successfully evacuate 338,000 troops from Dunkirk that May/June).

However, there is a wobble in this Churchill and, as the odds seem ever more desperate, he allows Halifax to open talks with an Italian intermediary. Here, the film invents a trip on the

London Underground where Churchill canvases public opinion on the peace negotiations. "This episode didn't happen in reality," says director Joe Wright, "but he did keep a very close eye on the polls at the time. He knew from the polls that the British public were very supportive of the policy of continuing to fight Hitler. He used those polls to support his position."

The film's climactic scenes return to the Churchill that many will be familiar with: a man using his renowned skill with words to charge Britain forward when the days seemed darkest. However, key to this film is showing Churchill as a man who had flaws and doubts, who considered a peace deal, who explored every option available. As Oldman's Churchill remarks to Anthony Eden in a final scene: "Those who never change their mind, never change anything." ●



## A Leader's Legacy

# JUDGEMENT OF HISTORY

No British prime minister has been as lionised as Churchill, a seemingly unassailable icon whose determination to “never surrender” saw Britain through its darkest hour. But how did he reflect on his own legacy in his later years, and how should we view him today?

BY NIGE TASSELL

**U**

nder the cover of darkness, on an undisclosed night sometime in the middle of the 20th century, a middle-aged

brother and sister drove a small van to a house in the English countryside. From the van, they removed a large, heavy painting, carried it round to the back garden and tossed it onto a bonfire. Very soon, it was reduced to ashes. This incident became one of the most notorious desecrations of a work of art in British history.

The painting was a significant one – a portrait of Winston Churchill by


the modernist artist Graham Sutherland, a gift from Britain's parliamentarians to mark the prime minister's 80th birthday in 1954. Churchill took an instant – and violent – dislike to it, followed by the rest of his family, including wife Clementine. “I think it is malignant,” he grumbled. Originally intended to hang in the Houses of Parliament, Clementine ensured that the painting was instead taken back to Chartwell, the Churchills' country home in Kent, away from public scrutiny. But Sutherland's creation – later described by *The Guardian's* art critic as portraying a man “old [and] grumpy, with an anger that no longer seems leavened by the humour and verbal creativity of the Churchill of

legend” – never hung on Chartwell's walls. Instead, it took pride of place in a darkened cellar.

Until, that is, that fateful night when it was liberated. The woman responsible for removing and destroying it was Lady Churchill's private secretary Grace Hamblin, aided by her brother. She later confessed to the act: “I destroyed it, but Lady C and I decided we would not tell anyone.”

The problem was that Sutherland had painted what had sat in front of him. The image Clementine had wanted was that of the all-conquering hero, the saviour of a nation. Instead, Sutherland's brush portrayed an elder



A full-page portrait of Winston Churchill by Graham Sutherland. Churchill is depicted seated in a large, dark, upholstered chair. He is wearing a dark, heavy suit jacket over a matching waistcoat and a dark bow tie. His expression is somber and weary, with deep lines around his eyes and a slight frown. He is looking directly at the viewer. The background is a simple, dark, paneled wall. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of his clothing and the contours of his face.

© ESTATE OF GRAHAM SUTHERLAND. PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY BURROWS © LARRY BURROWS COLLECTION

**ALTERED IMAGE**

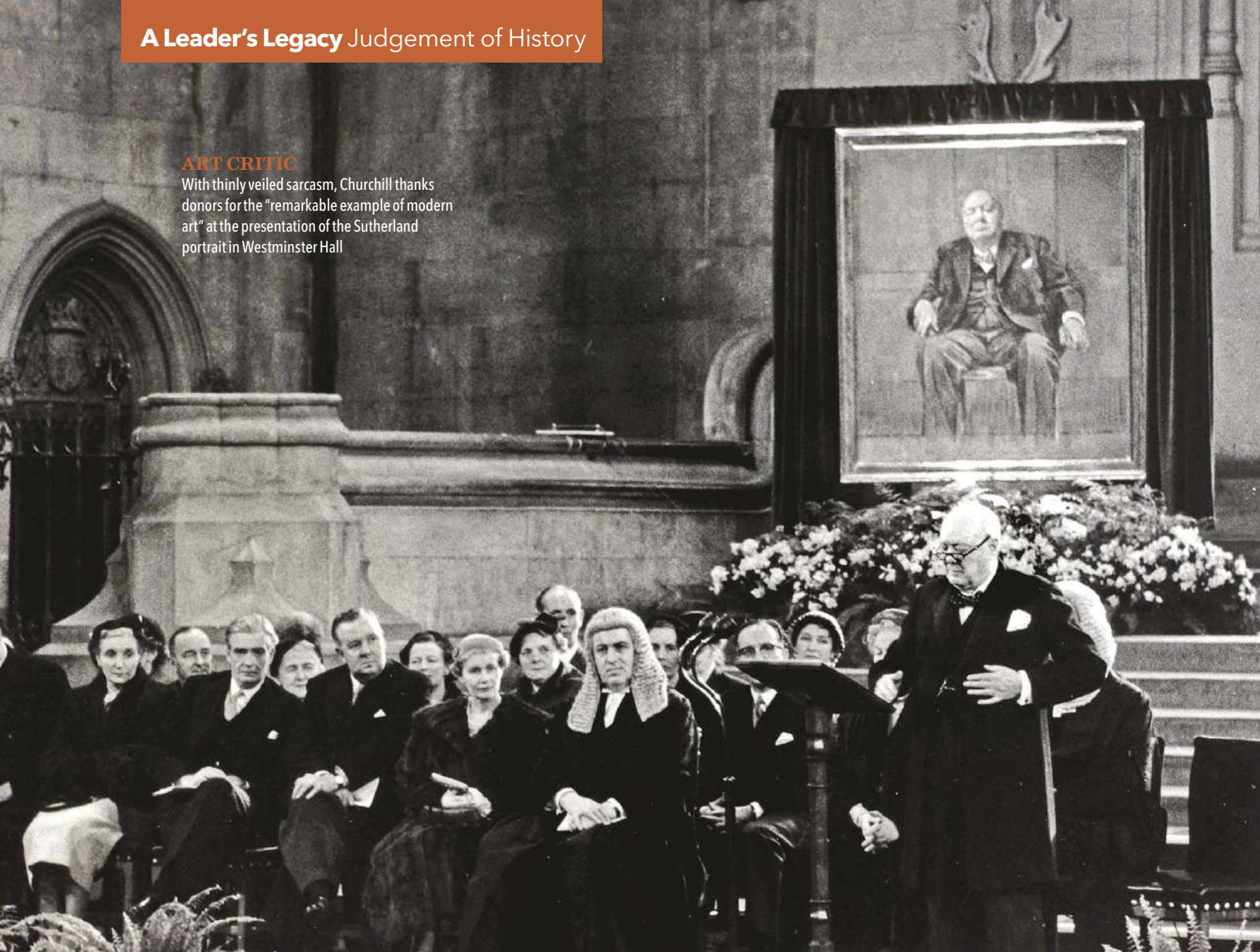
Slumped gloomily, looking aged and a shadow of his vigorous wartime self, the depiction of Winston in Graham Sutherland's 1954 portrait bitterly disappointed the Churchills, who keenly guarded his image as Britain's heroic leader



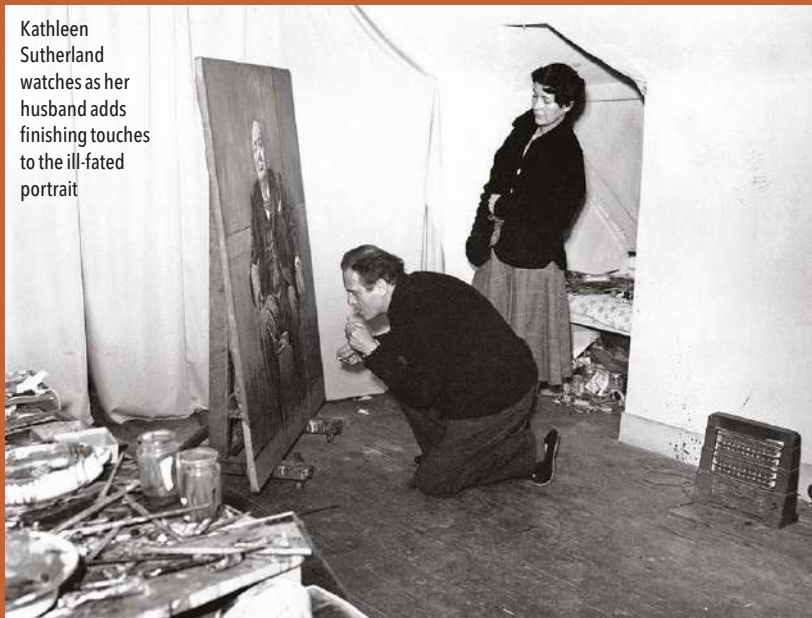


**ART CRITIC**

With thinly veiled sarcasm, Churchill thanks donors for the "remarkable example of modern art" at the presentation of the Sutherland portrait in Westminster Hall



Kathleen Sutherland watches as her husband adds finishing touches to the ill-fated portrait



**SITTINGS TURN SOUR**

"Are you going to paint me as a bulldog or a cherub?" Churchill demanded of Sutherland at his first sitting. "It depends on what you show me," the artist replied. The atmosphere was convivial; Clementine even wrote to her daughter: "Mr Sutherland is a 'Wow'. He really is a most attractive man." It was only days before the grand unveiling, however, that the Churchills were permitted to view the portrait. Instantly despising it, Winston was only persuaded to go ahead with the presentation (above) out of respect for the gathered members of the Houses of Commons and Lords who had funded the now-doomed picture.

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statesman, semi-slumped in a chair, ageing and very much mortal.

As energetic as she was in promoting her husband and his reputation while he was still alive, Clementine was an equally fierce protector of his legacy after his death. It was a legacy that Churchill had been privileged enough to put forward himself through his six-volume book *The Second World War*. Accordingly, for many years after his death in 1965, the prevailing public perception of Churchill was of the no-surrender leader, bravely marshalling the nation to fight the spectres of evil and extremism. “That is how he arranged it,” observed the writer Brian Cathcart. “Volume after volume of noble prose, all of them bestsellers, generously underpinned his heroic reputation.” Churchill was posthumously assisted in this by Edgar Williams, a decorated British intelligence officer who contributed a long and gushing eulogy to Churchill for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

### TAKING AIM AT AN ICON

As the years passed, war archives began to open their contents for scrutiny, offering up mountainous piles of documents for younger historians to pore over and form their own judgements on Churchill and his legacy. This material was ammunition for revisionist historians at both ends of the political spectrum. For critics on the left, it gave the opportunity to fracture the image of the war hero and shift focus to his treatment of the working classes and trade unionists around the time of the General Strike in 1926. He could also be cast as a man who, in hopping between the Conservative and Liberal parties, made his own

## “Revisionist takes on Churchill have had only a marginal impact on the public view of the leader over the decades”

survival a more pressing concern than being a public servant. (Even then, he cannily used his political shape-shifting to bolster his own legend, saying: “Anyone can rat, but it takes a certain amount of ingenuity to re-rat.”)

More surprising has been the number of detractors on the political right, iconoclasts intent on undermining him as a figurehead of the British ‘bulldog spirit’. Some have claimed that Churchill’s refusal to seek a negotiated peace with Hitler in 1940 was a fundamental mistake.

In *Churchill: The End of Glory*, historian John Charmley argues that the extent of the war effort accelerated the break-up of the British empire which, had Churchill chosen a different path in 1940, would have remained intact. Furthermore, he maintains that the victory in Europe five years later blinkered public opinion on this matter. “The war did make the British feel better about themselves,” he argues, “and it

gave them a comfort blanket to wrap around themselves as the chill winds of postwar decline blew; indeed, the very myths of ‘victory’ may well have contributed to that decline by encouraging British complacency.”

The end of empire wasn’t remotely on Churchill’s agenda, of course. On his ascension to 10 Downing Street, he made it clear that he had “not become the King’s First Minister to oversee the liquidation of the British empire”. But for his critics, not only had Churchill not taken enough care of empire, but his focus on the war effort also meant that he neglected the home front. To some, this is another reason to reexamine the image of Churchill as a leader working in the national interest. Economic conditions at home not only opened the door to Attlee’s Labour government in 1945, they ushered in a landslide victory for the socialists that Churchill had been so vocal in wishing to repel.

Although dismissed by certain Churchill scholars, recent years have also heard allegations that, by ordering grain bound for the subcontinent to be diverted to British troops in Europe, he caused the Bengal Famine of 1943–44 which took several million lives.

Despite the weight of revisionist takes on Churchill, these have only had a marginal impact on the public view of the leader over the decades. The popular perception as an exemplary national hero has at best been diluted, rather than overhauled completely.

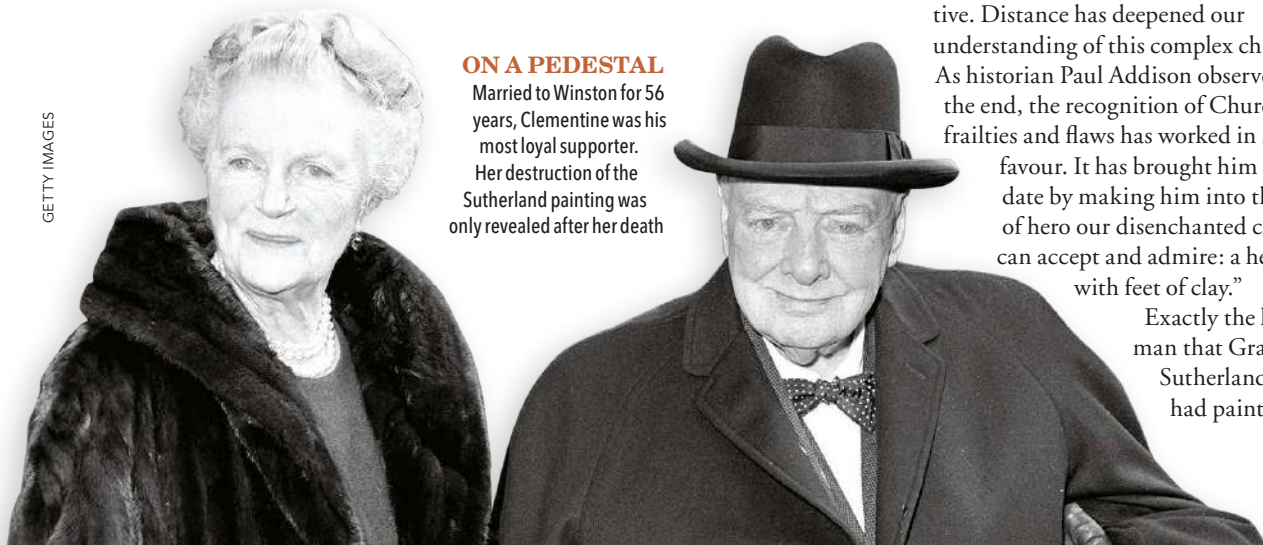
The 21st century has seen a general softening towards Churchill. No longer regarded as the undisputed hero that loyal Clementine promoted, the passing of time has allowed us to place him in a wider, more nuanced historical perspective. Distance has deepened our understanding of this complex character. As historian Paul Addison observes, “in the end, the recognition of Churchill’s frailties and flaws has worked in his favour. It has brought him up to date by making him into the kind of hero our disenchanted culture can accept and admire: a hero with feet of clay.”

Exactly the kind of man that Graham Sutherland had painted. ●

### ON A PEDESTAL

Married to Winston for 56 years, Clementine was his most loyal supporter. Her destruction of the Sutherland painting was only revealed after her death

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# CHURCHILL

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**Ellie Cawthorne** is a journalist and writer specialising in history, who has also presented radio documentaries. On page 80 she takes us on a tour of places that were important for the statesman.

**Matt Elton** is a journalist and editor specialising in global history. On page 42 he presents six of the renowned orator's most notable speeches.

**Elinor Evans** is a journalist specialising in history. On page 90 she examines some of the most notable attempts to depict the legendary leader on screen.

**Charlotte Hodgman** is a journalist who has written for several history publications. On page 14 she talks about Churchill's troubled childhood and then she gives an insight into Churchill's private life as a father and husband on page 22.

**Spencer Mizen** is a history journalist and writer. On page 26 he introduces Churchill the young politician and details his fall from grace in the First World War.

**Gavin Mortimer** is a best-selling writer, historian and television consultant, and the author of *The Long Range Desert Group in World War II* (Osprey, 2017). On page 6 he makes the case for Churchill as a flawed but nonetheless inspiring figure, then on page 48 he describes the complicated relationship between Churchill and President Roosevelt. He also details how Churchill was far from infallible as a military strategist on page 54.

**Allen Packwood** is the director of the Churchill Archives Centre and a fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. On page 36 he describes the crucial days in 1940 when Churchill became prime minister of a Britain on the brink of catastrophic defeat.

**Nige Tassell** is a journalist and author whose work has appeared in the pages of the *Guardian*, *Sunday Times*, *Independent*, *New Statesman*, *Esquire* and many others. On page 62 he describes the events of D-Day, the start of the Allied invasion of France. On page 94 he explores how the Churchills closely guarded Winston's legacy.

**Jonny Wilkes** is a freelance journalist who has written for several history publications. On page 18 he writes about Churchill's adventures in South Africa before he became an MP, then on page 32 he describes Churchill's years in the political wilderness. On page 68 we hear about Churchill's fading role as the Allies made plans for a post-Nazi world.



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# CHURCHILL

A Leader for All Ages



“He not only saved Britain, but showed to the rest of the world a charismatic defiance that inspired, encouraged and – above all – instilled hope that the forces of fascism would be defeated”

**Read more** on page 6